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Tinderbox:

Danish-Russian Relations, 1989-2019

Maddy Ghose

University of San Francisco

May 2020

Master of Arts in International Studies

Tinderbox: Danish-Russian Relations, 1989-2019

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

MASTER OF ARTS
in
INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

by **Maddy Ghose**

May 1, 2020

UNIVERSITY OF SAN FRANCISCO

Under the guidance and approval of the committee, and approval by all the members, this thesis project has been accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree.

APPROVED:

Capstone Adviser

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Abstract

This thesis documents and analyzes the major trends of the military, political, economic, and cultural relationships between Denmark and Russia from 1989 to 2019. I document the relationship from the Danish perspective, using primary sources, with the aim to conduct analysis of Danish politicians' speeches and activities during this period. The outcome is a comprehensive image of the Danish-Russian bilateral relationship at the present time. This relationship has fluctuated widely during the time period under study. Shared economic development interests in the 1990s contributed to a positive relationship; controversy surrounding the war in Chechnya and an assertive Danish prime minister caused a severe downturn in relations during the 2000s; between 2009 and 2014, Danish economic interests took top priority and helped salvage the relationship with Russia; but following what the West perceived as Russian aggression in Ukraine in 2014, combined with developments in the European energy sector, we are now seeing another low period in the Danish-Russian relationship. The fact that Denmark plays a key role in the linkages between European energy security and expansion of Russian energy exports, and has through its connection with Greenland a voice in the issues of sovereignty and access in the Arctic, competition over which is only going to increase in the coming years, underscores the importance of understanding this relationship.

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Introduction

In August 2019, American president Donald Trump approached the newly-elected Danish prime minister, Mette Frederiksen, with a real estate opportunity: he wanted to buy the autonomous Danish territory of Greenland. Frederiksen was, at the time, visiting Greenland. “This is an absurd discussion,” she told reporters.¹ “I persistently hope that this was not meant seriously.”² Trump called her response “nasty”, before lashing out against Denmark on Twitter and attacking the country’s NATO spending for not being high enough.³ He then canceled his upcoming state visit to Denmark, planned for the following month. This episode came seemingly out of nowhere and was widely ridiculed around the world. It also had the potential to be a confusing case for many casual American onlookers – as a small country, Denmark is often overlooked on the international stage, especially in the American perspective. However, looking past the jokes and incredulous reactions that ran rampant following Trump’s proposal, this episode actually serves as a near-perfect microcosm of Denmark’s bilateral relationship with a country that was not directly involved in the August drama: Russia.

Greenland, an island of over 800,000 square miles, is a highly strategic chip for Denmark, which on its own is only around 16,000 square miles. Denmark is also located some eight hundred miles from the Arctic Circle, while parts of Greenland are themselves located in the Arctic Circle. Greenland gives Denmark a voice in Arctic issues where it otherwise would have none. The Arctic is a region with rapidly growing significance to the rest of the world – as climate change takes its toll on the planet and melts more and more Arctic ice, new shipping

¹ Frederiksen qtd. in Kielgast 2019.

² Frederiksen qtd. in Juncker Jørgensen 2019.

³ Trump qtd. in Baker and Haberman 2019; Trump 2019.

lanes in the High North and new opportunities for drilling natural gas and oil are opening up. These openings are of high interest to, among other actors, both the United States and Russia. Greenland is centrally located within these areas of interest. The territory is also home to a massive US Air Force base, Thule, and is covered by NATO defense guarantees, due to its connection to Denmark.

This also makes Greenland, and Denmark by extension, an important piece to the military armament taking place in the Arctic between the US and Russia. Denmark and the US are longstanding military allies, and furthermore are inextricably linked by their shared NATO membership. It is thereby assumed that Denmark's possession of Greenland (which, again, is already home to a sizeable US military presence, and has been for decades) is automatically and already to the benefit of the US. The advantage that Trump perceived in the purchase of Greenland is, both theoretically and practically, already there and available to the US. The extension of the offer to buy Greenland clearly indicates that this assessment is not shared by the American president. Trump does not view Denmark as a reliable strategic ally in this region of the world, nor does he value strategically the relationship Denmark has with Russia.

Russia also arguably does not assign great strategic value to its relationship with Denmark. In addition to Denmark's positioning in Arctic issues, this is also despite Denmark's central positioning to the expansion of Russian energy interests in Western Europe. The laying of the Nord Stream and Nord Stream 2 gas pipelines on the bottom of the Baltic Sea are perceived by much of Eastern and Northern Europe to be a massive geopolitical threat, as it will increase European dependency upon Russian energy resources and decrease European energy security.⁴

⁴ Barteczko 2019; *ERR* 2018; *Latvian Public Broadcasting* 2018; Hnatyuk 2019; Laurenson 2020; Williams and Soldatkin 2019.

Denmark chose not to reject Nord Stream and was forced by law to accept Nord Stream 2, but remains centrally located in this key strategic neighborhood region, in which Russia also has vital interests and an interest in cooperation.

Between the Arctic and the Baltic, Denmark is a key player in both regions – it still continues to be undervalued and overlooked by its larger neighbors in these areas, particularly Russia. The relationship between the two countries has fluctuated significantly over the past thirty years, since the breakup of the Soviet Union. Tracking and analyzing how a relationship came to be is essential to understanding new developments within and around the relationship, as well as how its various components may be deployed or instrumentalized in the future. Outside of Denmark, and to a certain extent even within Denmark, there is little scholarly work tracing the real development and evolution of this bilateral relationship. This thesis seeks to do so, with a perspective situating Denmark at the nexus of collective and energy security in Europe.

Russia is one of the single most influential actors upon collective security, energy security, and their intersection; despite its tendency to be marginalized in international matters, Denmark is an influential part of this too. Access by anyone to knowledge about the varying relationships at play in this region will be instrumental in keeping well-informed, wide-perspective diplomacy at the forefront of today's resurgence of Cold War politics. As military armament and the race for resources pick up real speed in the Arctic, peaceful international cooperation and intensive dialogue are going to be of supreme importance to ensure that existing tensions and power dynamics in mainland Europe do not escalate into something worse in the High North. The chosen title of this thesis, *Tinderbox*, draws from a story written by famous Danish author Hans Christian Andersen and is intended to reflect the propensity for flares in conflict between Denmark and Russia, given the dynamics mentioned here.

This thesis follows a precise structure designed to build out my thematic findings from my research. The first body chapter reviews relevant events in Danish history from the 19th century onwards; some of these events take place in the context of Danish-Russian or Danish-Soviet relations, but others are limited to Danish experiences. The history chapter lays out the major foundations upon which the following chapters and insights are based. These are, broadly stated, Denmark's historical experiences as a small state surrounded by large neighbors; Denmark's transformative experiences with energy insecurity in the 1970s; and the alliance structures to which Denmark belongs, as well as Russian perceptions of and reactions to these structures. The literature review follows the history section, as many of the meaningful events that feature in the reviewed literature require certain historical context, which the history sections seeks to establish for the reader. The theoretical frameworks discussed, and subsequently the larger framework that this thesis develops and employs, all work within the broadly stated major foundations laid out in the history chapter.

Each of the following body chapters focuses on the theme of an individual foundation. Military relations are the focus of the chapter immediately following the literature review. I find Denmark's membership of and commitment to NATO to be a defining pillar of Danish-Russian relations, due to the opposing strategic aims of NATO and of Russia as unitary military actors; this incompatibility, combined with Denmark's key strategic location relative to Russia in the Baltic Sea, heightens the risk of bilateral conflict catalyzed by the two countries' military relationship. There has, however, been meaningful cooperation between the two in this area as well.

Political relations are the focus of the next chapter, because political opinions about Russia in Denmark have historically been informed to a high degree by military realities, even

when these realities did not directly involve Denmark; Denmark is highly pragmatic when it comes to this area of relations with Russia. Russia's wars in Chechnya served as turning points in how Danish politicians perceived and spoke of Russia and its government, and in turn became the values frame which shaped the Danish side of the political relationship for most of the 2000s.

Increased cooperation between the Danish and Russian economic sectors, specifically with regards to the energy industry, corresponded to a change in Denmark's strategic priorities and perceptions regarding Russia. The economic chapter therefore follows the political chapter. For approximately a decade bridging the 2000s and 2010s, economic priorities were the guiding ones on Denmark's side of the relationship; other political and economic concerns were largely pushed to the wayside. These concerns were resurrected in the mid-2010s and subsequently altered economic priorities once more, which brought a return to the colder relationship we see at the present.

The final body chapter discusses cultural relations, chiefly how Russia appears in Danish popular media; the intersection of culture, sports, and politics in their relationship; and concluding with a brief look at Russia's cultural cooperation mission in Denmark.

Methodology

In this thesis, I will document and analyze the major events, influences, and turning points in the Danish-Russian relationship across four broad components of the relationship: military, political, economic, and cultural. I will do so using open-source material, primarily public statements by Danish officials and archival policy and parliamentary documents from the Danish government, as well as Danish popular and journalistic media. I analyze discursive structures and changes over time and work through an individual-based approach to international

relations. The information gathered primarily focuses on the period of time between 1989 and 2019. My presentation and analysis of this information will create a comprehensive map of how this relationship evolved from optimistic, values-driven cooperation in the 1990s to a confrontational, historicized distancing in the 2000s, and from there to the 2010s' corporate-based artificial peace and subsequent resurrection of Cold War politics.

As a native Danish speaker, all translation of materials has been done myself; this does, however, limit the scope of my research and my topic to the Danish perspective of this bilateral relationship. A brief note regarding translation and interpretation concerns Danish naming conventions – in Denmark, due to a high volume of identical first and last name combinations, many people utilize their middle name or second surname, such as Anders Fogh Rasmussen, to distinguish themselves. In Danish, he would be referred to as Rasmussen, or Anders Fogh in a more casual setting; Fogh Rasmussen would only be used if there were another Rasmussen also referenced at the same time (for example, in a comparison of Anders Fogh Rasmussen and Lars Løkke Rasmussen). However, for the greatest ease of reading by a non-Danish audience, in this thesis I refer where possible to people by their middle and last names (Fogh Rasmussen), as there are many people referenced in this thesis with the same last names and this method of reference is least likely to cause confusion.

The bulk of the primary sources utilized in the research for this thesis came from the Danish parliament's digital archive, which can be found at the web address ft.dk, and from archived speeches made by Denmark's prime ministers, which can largely be found at the web address stm.dk. The archive contains records, both complete and partial, of parliamentary debates, legislative proposals and resolutions, and questions posed to ministers by members of parliament. Part of the analytical value of these records lies in their reflection of not only

measures that succeeded, but also measures that failed or were revised significantly; all iterations provide information about discussions and concerns that were had at some point, and therefore provide a fuller picture than if one were to draw only upon laws that succeeded in passing.

Records of debates, questions to ministers, and prime minister speeches are equally valuable because they provide much of the human dimension to the foreign policy decisions laid out by legislation. It is important that foreign policy analysis account for the real personalities and relationships of the people behind the policies. These more human contexts can be overlooked with relative ease, but in my view, it is a mistake to do so; I therefore attempt to keep central the human components of policy formation and diplomacy, wherever possible.

In addition to a range of nonfiction books about broader NATO-Russia and West-Russia relations written by experts in their respective fields, this thesis draws upon a number of fiction novels from Danish authors and works of film or television that relate peripherally or contextually to my primary topic. I already knew of and had consumed many of these works prior to beginning work on my thesis; therefore, part of my research process involved thinking back on books I had read or films I had watched out of personal interest in the past, and how they related either directly to Danish-Russian relations or proximally to context surrounding the relationship. I am half Danish and, as was mentioned previously in this section, am a native Danish speaker. These details are key to my research process, as the vast majority of sources for my research are not currently available in English.

History and Background

“Life is understood backwards but lived forwards.” - Søren Kierkegaard ⁵

Contemporary narratives of Danish history often prioritize one year in their stories: 1864. This was the year that cemented Denmark’s fall from grace as a powerful nation of roving seafarers that dominated the seas to the north. Some years prior, Denmark and the German Confederation fought a three-year war from 1848 to 1851 over the territory comprising present-day Denmark’s southern border and Germany’s northern one. This territory, the two duchies of Schleswig and Holstein, was contested because of the large and mixed populations of both Germans and Danes that lived here. The war in 1848 was fought for control over Schleswig-Holstein and Denmark came out victorious over the secessionists, in part due to the support that Russia, alongside Britain and France, had offered Denmark against the Prussians. Kiel, a key gateway port to the Baltic Sea, is located in Holstein and the Russians preferred it to be in Danish rather than German hands. The 1852 London Accords affirmed the Danish victory, but also included the condition that neither duchy could be constitutionally linked to the Danish state.

These seemingly clear legal guidelines were followed closely by the Danish government for about nine years, until King Christian IX allowed himself to be pressured by the Danish people into signing the November Constitution of 1863. This constitution was written to include Schleswig, which also meant that it was written in violation of international law under the 1852 peace accords. The violation gave Prussian Prime Minister Otto von Bismarck the opening he both needed and wanted to declare war on Denmark. The war lasted from Christmas Eve in 1863

⁵ Kierkegaard 1843.

until the summer of 1864 – a much quicker affair than the 1848 First Schleswig War, and a much more brutal one. Aid by Denmark's allies helped secure its victory in 1851, but this time help never materialized, despite promises by both Norway and Sweden to send assistance. Denmark suffered an abysmal defeat at the hands of its stronger southern neighbors and lost forty percent of its territory, which it never fully regained. Only Northern Schleswig would rejoin the Danish kingdom after the conclusion of World War I. From 1864 onwards, Denmark was consigned to almost a century of submission.

The next key part of the story begins on April 9th, 1940. The evening before, Danish military intelligence on the southern border with Germany reported German military movement near the border, but it was assumed to be a drill – Denmark had signed a non-aggression pact with Germany in 1939. Early in the morning of the 9th, it became quickly clear that the German movements were not a drill; they were war. The Danish troops stationed along the border were mobilized, but were much weaker than the incoming German troops. Their poor training and equipment combined with the utter surprise of this unexpected entrance into war and led to the total capitulation of the Danish state within just a few hours. Denmark remained under the heel of the Nazis until 1945 and was under direct military occupation from 1943 to 1945, and although the government pursued a policy of cooperation with the Nazis, Danes were able to successfully evacuate almost all of the country's Jews safely to Sweden, as well as carry out a coordinated resistance movement against the occupying forces.

The British army was responsible for most of Denmark's liberation in the spring of 1945, aside from the eastern Danish island of Bornholm. Bornholm was liberated by the Soviet Red Army at the same time. An internal memo from M. Vetrov, a member of the Soviet foreign affairs committee, to Vladimir Dekanozov, a deputy foreign minister, on April 2, 1945, laid out

the importance of Soviet naval forces being the first to liberate and occupy Bornholm, which was strategically located the furthest east into the Baltic Sea of all of Denmark's territories. Citing Denmark's position as a "guard post" at the juncture between the Baltic and the Atlantic, Vetrov wrote to his colleague, "On the basis of our occupation of Bornholm, [we should] proceed to the practical signing of a Soviet-Danish military agreement that gives us unconditional right to participate with our High Command in the exercise of the highest responsible authority in Denmark, until a Danish government is formed with the free will of the Danish people."⁶

At the same time, Major General Richard Dewing, who was heading up the Allied mission to Denmark, told army personnel, "Russia is displaying political interests in Denmark, and we must, in the common areas we have with them, try not to step on their toes."⁷ Additionally, miscommunications by a key Danish representative to the Soviet Union, Thomas Døssing, mistakenly gave the Allies the belief that there existed an agreement between Denmark and the Soviet Union that the latter could take control of Bornholm.

So, while the rest of Denmark spent May of 1945 celebrating the Allied victory and the Nazi surrender, Bornholm Danes were having a very different experience. They first suffered an intensive Soviet bombing campaign that left much of the island in ruin – then they were forgotten by their countrymen. All told, the Red Army would remain on Bornholm for almost an entire year after the war ended for everybody else. During this period, Soviet soldiers regularly raped, assaulted, robbed, and burglarized the people of Bornholm, and there seemed to be very little recognition of this reality coming from news in mainland Denmark.⁸ This became a

⁶ Hornemann 2006, p. 54.

⁷ Hornemann 2006, p. 60.

⁸ Gaarskjær 2012, 40.

politically uncomfortable situation for the Danish government, as time passed and troops of other foreign nations had already gone home but the Red Army remained.

Finally, the Danish foreign minister Gustav Rasmussen brought the issue up with the Soviet deputy foreign minister, Andrey Vyshinsky, when the two met in London in February 1946. “I had said I was convinced that the Soviet Union did not have a hidden agenda towards Denmark, but had to emphasize that the troops’ recall would remove the last reason for mistrust of the Soviet Union that the Danish public had,” Rasmussen recounted in his notes of the meeting.⁹ Døssing, the Danish envoy to the Soviet Union, finally brought a letter to Soviet foreign minister Vyacheslav Molotov that formally requested a recall of the Soviet troops, several months later.¹⁰ Molotov responded, “If Denmark is prepared to take over the island of Bornholm with its own troops and set up its own administration, without any participation of foreign troops and foreign administrators, then the Soviet government will recall its troops from Bornholm and give the island over to the Danish state.”¹¹ The Red Army went home in the spring of 1946. Its extended occupation, however, caused uncertainty among the politicians back in Copenhagen and real trauma among the Bornholm residents who had been forced to live and deal with these soldiers for so long.

The Cold War era began in Denmark against a backdrop of humiliation from the German machine in the south and unease towards the Russian bear in the east. Despite the drama that transpired over Bornholm, Danish-Soviet cooperation continued with relatively few issues after its resolution. During a meeting between Danish diplomat Nils Svenningsen and Soviet diplomat Ilya Chernyshov in the spring of 1946, both envoys expressed a mutual interest in continuing

⁹ Hornemann 2006, p. 323.

¹⁰ Hornemann 2006, p. 336-337.

¹¹ Ibid.

open conversations about issues concerning both countries.¹² Some of the issues that were brought up in this early meeting – interest in Nordic cooperation, Danish prioritization of the UN, Danish militarization – were topics of discussion throughout the Cold War, if not beyond. Danish-Soviet interactions from the 1950s through the 1970s were marked by a variety of differing tones, but an odd insecurity from the side of the Soviets remained a constant throughout. The North Atlantic Treaty was signed in 1949, creating NATO, and this would quickly and indefinitely become a contentious roadblock in Danish-Soviet relations, as well as broader West-Soviet/West-Russia relations.

When Danish diplomat Alex Mørch met with Marshal Kirill Moskalenko in 1956, he noted Moskalenko's fear of an American-led NATO forcing the European members to commit troops to an assault on the USSR; this anxiety that Denmark and other European countries could be forced by NATO to act appeared multiple other times throughout documented diplomatic interactions during the Cold War.¹³ There was always the possibility of a crazy adventurer coming to power in a country and starting a war no one wanted, or so claimed Moskalenko; although this fear can likely be traced to the USSR's years under Josef Stalin, there is irony in its realization again forty years later, when Vladimir Putin first came to power in Russia. The conversation was characterized by mistrust and suspicion of NATO and Western intentions from Moskalenko, which led Mørch to conclude his letter with the remark that it was depressing how misinformed such a highly ranked person had to be in order to believe that the Western countries were seriously considering an assault on the Soviet Union.¹⁴

¹² Svenningsen 1946.

¹³ Sinnbeck 1958; Hansen 1959; Adamsen 1960.

¹⁴ Mørch 1956.

However, Denmark's close cooperation with NATO countries and with West Germany in particular was concerning to the Soviets, although they did not appear to perceive Denmark as an important actor in its own right. Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev was interviewed by *Danish Democracy*, a newspaper for members of the conservative political party Venstre's youth chapter, in 1958; in his responses, Khrushchev never spoke of Denmark on its own, but only ever as part of bilateral relations or in a group of other countries, such as NATO or the Scandinavian countries. In the interview, he doubled down on the earlier strategy of warning Denmark against the alliances it was choosing – he warned against the creation of a Baltic naval command (which was eventually created anyway in 1962), missile armament in the Nordics (which was not taking place), and the militarization of the Baltic region (which was, according to him, being done against the will of the “peaceful” Scandinavian countries). In his summary of the interview, the writer for the newspaper emphasized that the interview had not been conducted out of any support for Khrushchev; that Khrushchev's perception of the Scandinavian countries as peaceful was mistaken; and that Soviet threats would not force any of the Nordic countries to “crawl into a mousehole”.¹⁵

In October 1956, a student protest began in Budapest, Hungary, against the Soviet-backed Hungarian People's Republic. The protest quickly gained traction and turned into a full revolution that saw huge popular mobilization across the country, mobilization which seemed to successfully turn the political tides in the country. In November, the Soviet government sent a large military force to invade the country. Hungarian resistance was able to withstand a week of brutal fighting before it was finally put down by the Red Army. In Denmark, this event was regarded with horror and shock. At a meeting in March 1957, a secretary at the Soviet embassy

¹⁵ Sinnbeck 1958.

to Denmark expressed to Danish diplomat Hans Møller his wish for Danish-Soviet relationships to become again as good as they had been before the Hungarian Revolution; Møller replied honestly that, for him, it had been a “very painful and sorrowful experience to see what had happened in Hungary, and it had made a deep impression on [him] and in fact seriously damaged [his] otherwise friendly feelings towards the Soviet Union.”¹⁶

Likewise, the editor of Khrushchev’s interview with *Danish Democracy* in 1958 made a point of bringing up the invasion, which he described as a “murderous assault” intended to “preserve the [Russian] empire” and which Khrushchev would undoubtedly dismiss as “internal affairs”.¹⁷ Danes were clearly very shaken by this evidence that the Soviet Union was willing to violently interfere within the borders of other countries, if it believed those countries to be hosting anti-Soviet behaviors or ideas. The Russian willingness to violate small countries and the open Danish disgust at such actions will make significant reappearances at later points in their bilateral relationship.

The following year, when Hungarian Revolution leader Imre Nagy was executed by the Soviets for his role in the revolution, Danes protested outside of the Soviet embassy in Copenhagen. The Soviet government organized a revenge protest outside the Danish embassy in Moscow, in which stones were thrown through the embassy windows and the walls graffitied with slogans such as “down with Danish puppets”, “down with the warmongers”, and “shame on the Danish NATO-lackeys”. Soviet authorities denied having played any part in the organization of the protests (Alex Mørch described the official Soviet response as the type one receives “only in dictator countries”), and the official Danish position was that the protest had been organized

¹⁶ Møller 1957, p. 2.

¹⁷ Sinnbeck 1958, p. 2.

without the knowledge or permission of the Soviet government. In his cable from the Moscow embassy back home to Copenhagen, however, Mørch wrote that the Soviet authorities had, “without a doubt”, aided the protests. Despite this, he advised that this incident not be interpreted as “an expression of particular ill will towards Denmark.”¹⁸

The 1960s opened with more tension between the USSR and Denmark over Denmark’s NATO membership. Despite repeated claims by Soviet officials throughout the Cold War period that the USSR did not fear Denmark, those same officials often had strong reactions to Denmark’s participation in NATO and support of the West during the Cold War. A NATO drill called Hold Fast took place around the Danish-West German border in the fall of 1960. Royal Danish Defense College students participated alongside regular Danish soldiers in the drill; specifically, students who were studying Russian language at the Defense College were chosen to act as Soviet prisoners of war. Denmark’s role in Hold Fast, as well as the drill itself, were eviscerated in the Soviet press; a September 1960 article in the Soviet military newspaper *Red Star* called the drill “provocative”, claimed that it painted the USSR as aggressors and justified support of the “German revanchists”, and pointed to it as proof that alignment with NATO “pushes small countries like Denmark down a dangerous road”.¹⁹

A Soviet embassy representative named Rylnikov took this a step further in his conversation with the Danish secretary to the prime minister, Helge Hjortdal, and equated Operation Hold Fast to cooperation with “a potential enemy”.²⁰ In the same meeting, Rylnikov expressed his concern for how the USSR was perceived in Denmark, due to the Danish media’s generally unfavorable coverage of the USSR. Hjortdal replied that it was the Danish public’s

¹⁸ Mørch 1958.

¹⁹ Adamsen 1960.

²⁰ Hjortdal 1960.

negative perceptions of the Danish Communist Party (DKP) that were to blame. Relatedly, the DKP traveled to Moscow in April 1963 to meet with the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU), and was given a warm reception, hosted by a number of high-profile members of the Soviet government.

During the DKP's "warm and friendly" meeting with two Soviet representatives the next day, the DKP shared its preference for a neutral, atomic weapon-free Nordic region, including Denmark; in response, the Soviet representatives said that their government was willing to honor the territorial integrity of neutral states.²¹ The unspoken implication of such a statement can be taken to mean that the Soviet government would *only* honor the territorial integrity of neutral states; non-neutral, or aligned, states could reasonably expect the opposite. The implicit threat here was expanded upon by the Danish ambassador to the Soviet Union, Christian Holten-Eggert, when he wrote the Danish foreign minister Per Hækkerup a few days later to summarize the DKP's meeting. The Soviet side had mentioned that "Danish-Soviet trade could double, even triple, if only Denmark itself wanted it to", but it was implied that such trade growth was contingent upon Denmark leaving NATO in return.²²

Soviet pressure on Denmark to leave NATO intensified in the 1960s and took on a new, harsher tone. Hækkerup met with Khrushchev towards the end of 1963, and the Soviet Premier insisted on bringing up the past – when then-Danish Prime Minister H.C. Hansen declined to sell tankers to the USSR in 1956 – before urging Denmark yet again to leave NATO. Denmark was supporting aggressive forces, he said, and the USSR did not fear Denmark. Hækkerup responded that it was the Danish position that "the road to détente goes over agreements between NATO

²¹ *Land og folk* 1963.

²² Holten Eggert 1963.

and the Warsaw Pact”.²³ Khrushchev continued to raise the issue with increasing aggression during his meetings in 1964 with Danish Prime Minister Jens Otto Krag. At a meeting of the two leaders in February, Khrushchev accused Denmark of following the American policy line and discriminating against the USSR, before again bringing up the relationship between Denmark and West Germany. “I don’t know what tie connects these two countries; it must be like the rope and the hanged man,” he told Krag.²⁴ A few months later, he told Krag that the USSR could be a better friend to Denmark than NATO could.²⁵ For such a large country, and one that claimed so often it did not fear Denmark, Soviet positions towards the smaller country continued to take on an increasingly defensive, insecure, and oddly paranoid tone. There was not much to be feared from Denmark by itself, certainly, but the Soviet Union arguably feared the friends Denmark had made and the capabilities it could gain from these friendships.

However, this is not to say that relations between the two countries in the 1960s were purely tension-based. Krag was sure to emphasize the goodwill he held towards the Soviet people, although this could have been careful word choice to avoid expressing goodwill towards the Soviet state. His conversations with Khrushchev also focused heavily on the trade relationship between the two countries; Denmark has long prided itself on its agriculture, and its agricultural goods and knowledge were highly valued trade commodities in the Soviet Union. Another issue that reappeared multiple times in their meetings was the inability of Soviet citizens to travel to Denmark to visit family they had there; when Krag brought up the case of a Danish man who was married to a Soviet woman and wanted his mother-in-law to be able to come and visit from the Soviet Union, Khrushchev replied jokingly, “That can be allowed. It is very

²³ Hækkerup 1963.

²⁴ Krag 1964a.

²⁵ Krag 1964b.

seldom that one wishes to be visited by their mother-in-law.”²⁶ The relationship between leaders appeared to improve a bit when Khrushchev was removed from power in October 1964 and replaced by a troika of leaders; Alexei Kosygin, who replaced Khrushchev as Premier, was well-regarded by Krag after their initial meetings in October 1965. Despite this, Krag did at one point during these meetings feel the need to remind Kosygin that Danish territory is not small; Greenland is Danish, and Denmark will use it.²⁷ This will also reoccur as a key strategic part of the Danish-Russian relationship further down the road.

In 1972, there was a minor espionage scandal between the two states when Danish intelligence (PET) caught three Soviet embassy employees engaging in espionage activities in Denmark. Danish authorities decided against expelling them, for the sake of preserving good Danish-Soviet relations; however, they did strongly warn the Soviet Union that action would be taken if there were further Soviet spies caught in the future, and action included reconsidering the expulsion of the three original spies. They did advise that a voluntary recall was made of the three diplomats, stating that this would be taken as a mark of goodwill in their bilateral relationship, and the Soviet government complied. However, the Soviet ambassador, much like other representatives from his country in decades past, was quite upset about negative Danish media coverage of the incident. The Soviet government issued a retaliatory request in the summer of 1972 asking for the voluntary recall of two employees at the Danish embassy in Moscow, who had allegedly been caught engaging in matters of espionage.²⁸

In the fall of 1973, the Yom-Kippur War broke out, pitting Israel against Egypt and Syria. As a result, numerous Arab countries increased oil prices to the rest of the world, and in some

²⁶ Krag 1964a.

²⁷ Krag 1965.

²⁸ DIIS 2005, p. 123-128.

cases decreased their production. The intention was to put pressure on countries that had expressed support for Israel. Denmark was hit by this sudden shortage as much as any other country and asked its citizens to limit their oil consumption towards the end of October, approximately a month after the initial outbreak of war. On November 5th, however, Danish Prime Minister Anker Jørgensen gave an impromptu speech in the town of Middelfart. In this speech, he said that he could, “for the most part”, understand and justify “Israel’s aggression”.²⁹ This speech nearly marked Denmark for death, so to speak. Because of this public display of support for Israel, Denmark ran the risk of being singled out for a complete oil embargo, as had happened to the Netherlands and the United States. According to the Saudi oil minister during a private visit to Copenhagen a few weeks later, Denmark had been a mere two votes away from suffering this outcome.³⁰

The oil never fully stopped flowing to Denmark, but the shortages experienced within the country and the persistently high prices even after the embargo was lifted were significant enough that Denmark began to explore the potential for energy supply cooperation with its Scandinavian neighbors Norway and Sweden. Ultimately this crisis (as well as the ramifications of the 1979 crisis, when the Iranian Revolution took place) demonstrated to the Danish government the importance in guaranteeing supply security, moving from imported to national sources of energy, and shifting from a market-driven energy system to one driven by policy and planning.³¹

Neither Oleg Gordievsky’s name nor his exploits during the Cold War receive as much notoriety as those of other historical figures produced by this period. However, as the highest-

²⁹ Villaume 2005.

³⁰ *DR* 2010.

³¹ Rüdiger 2014.

ranking defector from the Soviet Union, his impact upon the outcome of the Cold War should not be understated. In 1983, NATO ran a nuclear drill called Able Archer 83. Unfortunately, to Soviet eyes this drill looked alarmingly like the real thing, and the call was put out to mobilize the Soviet missile systems and prepare to strike the US.³² The Soviet alert stood down after the conclusion of the NATO drill; its fearful reaction was never publicly released by the state. The West, however, was able to learn of the severity of Soviet paranoia because of Oleg Gordievsky. The former KGB colonel was recruited by MI6, the British intelligence service, in the 1970s to serve as a double agent against the Soviet Union. Gordievsky was identified as a potential defector in the 1960s by the Danish intelligence service, PET, while he was living in Copenhagen on a “diplomatic” posting to Denmark during the course of his KGB work. He grew disillusioned with the Soviet Union after its brutal repression of the popular uprisings in Czechoslovakia and Hungary, and became a fan of living in Denmark after his initial posting there.³³ PET picked up on this in its monitoring of the Soviet embassy employees and contacted MI6 to see if they would be willing to do the legwork in recruiting him.

Gordievsky was a valuable double agent for approximately a decade, but his greatest contribution was his report back to his handlers about the Soviet reaction to Able Archer 83. The role that information plays in both preventing and leading to conflict is difficult to overstate – wars often break out because one side lacks adequate information about the intentions or abilities of the other. The information provided by Gordievsky demonstrated to Western leaders that they were dealing with a hair-trigger relationship; as the Chief of MI6 Sir John Scarlett said in 2009, “more confidence developed that the other side was understood, and that helped manage the

³² Andrew and Gordievsky 1991, 86-87.

³³ Foy 2019.

situation and was a key reason why we got to the end [of the conflict] without a blowout”.³⁴ The good work of PET and the appeal of Denmark to a disenchanted KGB agent were key reasons for securing that confidence.

The last clash of the Cold War between Denmark and the Soviet Union before the demise of the latter took place on a stage that was at once deeply symbolic and slightly unexpected – the soccer field. The Danish men’s national team of the 1980s was dubbed “Danish Dynamite” for its unprecedented successes on the field and self-deprecating swagger off it. On June 5th, 1985, Denmark’s Constitution Day, at Idrætsparken (as the stadium was called at the time) in Copenhagen, the Danish Dynamite squad pulled off a huge underdog victory against the Soviet Union to qualify for the 1986 World Cup in Mexico. In the days leading up to the match, Danish newspapers ran pieces with headlines like “WE WILL SKIN THE RUSSIAN BEAR”.³⁵ Denmark had met the Soviets on the field eight previous times and lost each one, giving up thirty goals along the way.³⁶ This poor record ended in Copenhagen that day – Danish legends Preben Elkjær and Michael Laudrup scored two goals each to down the Soviet Union 4-2.

This is one of the most legendary games played by one of the most legendary squads in world soccer history, and the symbolic value on both a sporting and a national level was immense. Looking back on the match several decades later, Laudrup (who was only 20 at the time of the match) said, “In my many matches with the national team, there have been big matches, but the meeting with the Soviet Union 22 years ago remains one of the biggest, because everything stood for something bigger than itself...It was like winning a World Cup title,

³⁴ Corera 2009.

³⁵ *Berlingske* 2014.

³⁶ FIFA 2009.

because it was the Soviet Union itself we knocked down”.³⁷ In 2008, he became the manager of Spartak Moscow, one of the four Moscow clubs that play in the Russian Premier League, and told Danish magazine *EkstraBladet* in an interview that the Russians have not forgotten the match, but that “the Russians are so happy when I tell them that in Denmark, that match is counted as one of the three best national team games ever”.³⁸

Of additional interest is that the in-stadium advertising, while mostly for Danish candy brands and Denmark’s beloved draft beer Carlsberg, included Shell Oil and Danfoss, a Danish company that produces heating technology and since the 1970s has placed a premium on optimizing the efficiency of thermoregulation and radiator products. The advertising of each of these companies at one of the most-viewed Danish sporting events ever is significant especially given the context of the time period – the oil crises of the 1970s were still fresh memories, and the reorganization of the Danish energy sector still underway.

By the end of the 1980s and the end of the Soviet Union, a clear picture was emerging of what Denmark would look like in the years to come. The country went through a little less than a century of trauma at the hands of its larger neighbors and emerged from the Second World War as a determined member of NATO and contributor to the efforts of the West throughout the Cold War. From its experiences with war between 1864 and 1945, Denmark took away the lesson of the great risks that can easily befall a small country if it does not take care to build strong alliances and situate itself within a greater coalition. Diplomatic relations between Denmark and the Soviet Union during the Cold War revealed open and honest, if not always positive, interactions between representatives of each country. They also cast light on tensions in the

³⁷ Nielsen 2007.

³⁸ Laudrup qtd. in Sloth 2008.

bilateral relationship that would heavily shape the relationship on both sides during the post-Cold War period. The energy crises of the 1970s tempered this lesson – overreliance on one country or region can just as easily hurt a country as isolation can. The goal of self-sufficiency in Danish energy policy from that point forwards will become a key part of the Denmark-Russia story later on; however, at the end of the Cold War, Denmark had chosen the surviving side and had taken a symbolic victory as well over the Soviet Union on the soccer pitch, and it entered into the post-Soviet era with confidence in itself and optimism for the new states joining it in Europe.

Literature Review

This thesis will make an argument for the significance of the Danish-Russian relationship within a broader European context of collective security, energy security, and the overlap between the two. Denmark's shared water border with Russia and its location at the center of Northern, Eastern, and Western Europe place it uniquely in a fairly central role to some of the largest collective and energy security issues Europe currently faces. However, literature documenting and analyzing comprehensively the recent development of the two countries' relationship in the post-Cold War era is lacking. Additionally, Denmark and its role in the international system is often undervalued in literature originating outside of Denmark or the larger Scandinavian/Nordic region. This paper seeks to contribute to this gap in the literature and argue for the relevance of the Danish-Russian relationship to actors outside of Denmark, including in Russia itself. The rest of this section will review the major themes that frame this argument and the relevant theoretical frameworks that will be used to advance it.

Collective security

Collective security in Europe following World War II was initially manifested by the opposing security blocs on either side of the Iron Curtain – the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and the Warsaw Pact. The bipolarity of the global threat landscape during the Cold War meant that countries fell fairly simply into one of three camps, aligning with either the Western liberal order, the Eastern communist one, or neutral non-alignment. The end of the Cold War saw the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact, comprising the USSR, Albania, Hungary, Poland, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Bulgaria, and Romania. The expectation of many former Warsaw Pact members, especially Russia, was that NATO, too, would dissolve, as there was no longer a need for its existence. NATO, however, neither shared nor fulfilled this expectation. Consequently, NATO's role in a post-Cold War, European Union-adjacent security architecture has been and still is a hotly debated subject. NATO itself lacks internal consensus about what its principal role, primary duties, and future expansion policies should be; this makes more difficult the process of securitization, which can be defined as the justified and urgent response of an actor to a perceived threat.³⁹

In the EU context, as well, threat construction varies by member state, and this can hinder a securitizing move in response to Russian activities or behavior. However, worth noting is Floyd's argument that collective securitization need not have "unanimous or even majority support" in order to be just and morally permissible.⁴⁰ NATO has also had to reorient itself following Russia's 2014 annexation of Crimea. This reorientation meant a return to a regional focus upon Europe, as opposed to the organization's more global strategy in the 2000s of

³⁹ Sperling and Webber 2019, p. 236.

⁴⁰ Floyd 2019, p. 406.

focusing upon its borders.⁴¹ The willingness of countries to go to war on behalf of certain other countries, whether due to geographic location, the ability of the threatened country to protect itself, or other competing interests, is another weakness that Russia continues to highlight successfully with its challenging behavior in the Baltic Sea Region, which includes Denmark.⁴²

NATO and Russia have always had an inherently flawed relationship. The Warsaw Pact dissolved alongside the Soviet Union, but NATO continued to function, and indeed expand, after the Cold War ended. The expectations Russia and NATO have had of each other since 1991 have never really aligned; they may simply have “fundamentally irreconcilable strategic interests”.⁴³ The Russian feeling of marginalization by the principal actors determining the post-Cold War security order is argued by a number of Western scholars to have been the primary factor in Russia’s decision in 2008 to end what George Friedman terms its “long period of irrelevance” by invading Georgia.⁴⁴

A defining feature of the Cold War was the arms race – one side, in developing new and more advanced weaponry, posed a larger threat than before to the other side, which then felt the need to augment its own security with its own improved weaponry, and so on. This is an example of the concept known as the security dilemma, which states that “many of the means by which a state tries to increase its security decrease the security of others”.⁴⁵ The liberal international order after the Cold War was intended to be one in which countries could freely choose their own alignment and their partners. The failure of the West, however, to take Russia seriously in the 1990s and better incorporate it into the new structures taking shape helped lay

⁴¹ Ivanov 2017, p. 147; Dahl 2018.

⁴² Kasekamp 2018; Coker 2018; Vedby Rasmussen 2018.

⁴³ Foerster 2017, p. 55; Ivanov 2017.

⁴⁴ Hill 2018; Wolff 2017; Friedman 2015, p. 116.

⁴⁵ Jervis 1978, p. 169.

part of the foundation upon which the conflicts of the 2000s and 2010s would be built. Both NATO and the EU eagerly pursued this liberal order, expanding quickly eastward to fulfill the promise of self-determination that much of Eastern Europe had been denied with the brutal Soviet repressions of the second half of the 20th century. Russian concerns over NATO's intentions, suspicious of its claim to be a purely defensive alliance, flared up again with the ascension to power of Vladimir Putin, a young new Russian prime minister with a grudge against the West.

NATO's expansion is arguably an example of a classic security dilemma. NATO aspirants hope to gain security with the organization's expansion; in the case of several Eastern European countries, this more specifically means safety from Russia. Russia feels increasingly threatened by NATO and takes steps to make itself more secure, whether through conventional military armament or illegal acts of aggression taken against its neighbors; the cycle continues. As a country on the Baltic, Denmark is rather closer to some of these saber-rattling events than the rest of its Western partners in either NATO or the EU, yet further from the action than the member states which feel most threatened by Russia, namely Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Poland. Denmark is geographically well-placed to take part in NATO collective security initiatives in the region, as well as the integrated EU trade of the Baltic Sea Region. This also puts it in a spot to act as a bridge for both security and economic concerns of Eastern and Western members of both treaties.

Trade and conflict

With regards to Denmark and Russia, there are key questions surrounding the effect that their very limited trade relationship may or may not have upon the quality and standing of their overall relationship. The consensus of much of the literature on the ties between trade and

conflict is that trade most often has a tempering effect upon dynamics of conflict between countries; generally, the more bound up in trade a country is with another, whether directly as partners or indirectly through mutual partners, the costlier it will be for the countries to break those ties and go to war. Hegre attempts to find an empirical solution to the question of whether “trade may increase the risks of conflict if a powerful partner in an asymmetrical relationship employs the weaker partner’s dependence to obtain political concessions”.⁴⁶ He ultimately finds, however, that while trade in a symmetric dyad decreases the propensity for conflict, there is no empirical evidence indicating that an asymmetric dyad is at greater risk of entering into conflict.

Similarly, Kinne finds that asymmetric trade is strongly correlated with centrality (defined by Kinne as a measure of trade integration based on the breadth and strength of a state’s trade ties); the more asymmetric trade relationships a state is a part of, the greater the constraints upon it and the less likely it is to pursue conflictual behavior.⁴⁷ In the case of Russia, however, it is the main trade partner of countries in what it considers to be the Russian sphere of influence (primarily the former Soviet Union). Due to the obvious size discrepancies between Russia and its small neighboring countries, there is a significant degree of asymmetry inherent to these trade relationships that does not prevent Russia from provoking conflict with these countries. Kinne’s finding appears therefore to apply to the smaller partner in an asymmetric trade relationship.

As will be explored later in this paper, Denmark used its trade ties to Russia in 2009 to salvage what had been a broken, negative relationship for the better part of the decade, when it accepted Russia’s bid to route the Nord Stream gas pipeline from northwestern Russia to northern Germany through Danish waters. This highly significant deepening of otherwise

⁴⁶ Hegre 2004, p. 404.

⁴⁷ Kinne 2012.

negligible trade ties between the two countries did decrease the likelihood of conflict in their relationship in the short term, but had larger implications in the area of energy security.

Energy

Energy security is a highly ambiguous concept, the focus and emphasis of which change easily according to the intent with which the concept is being deployed. I will be primarily using Kalicki and Goldwin's definition of energy security, "the assurance of the ability to access the energy resources required for the continued development of national power," with the qualifier that the assurance of ability for access comes free of political influence by external actors.⁴⁸ Europe's growing dependency upon Russian energy supplies is widely considered to be a threat to European security and political sovereignty. Russia has made no secret of its willingness to shut off the gas flow to some of its energy partners in Eastern Europe over the last fifteen years or so alone, but there is disagreement over whether Russia would take these same steps against Western European partners, were it to increase its leverage over them through increasing gas deliveries.

Although Russia is also a major exporter of oil, the methods of transporting gas (pipeline) versus oil (barrels) make the gas market easier for creating asymmetries of structure, and thus of power.⁴⁹ Nygård finds that Russia has both the will and the way to wield gas as an instrument of foreign policy against Western Europe, as it does in Eastern Europe. Despite this, because Russia depends on the income from higher gas prices in Western Europe, it is unlikely to shut off the gas to the West. However, the EU's gas production is falling, and consequently it will need to import more gas over the coming decades, as renewable energy sources are not yet ready to play

⁴⁸ Kalicki and Goldwyn 2005.

⁴⁹ Nygård 2011.

a competitive role for much of Europe. Echoing Nygård, Paillard argues that “Russia has the means and the political will to create new routes and to make countries favorably disposed to its economic and political interests, regardless of European policy,” while also recognizing that Russia and Europe will need each other to stay above water for the next few decades at least.⁵⁰

Paillard recommends that reorganization of European gas industries and development of liquefied natural gas (LNG) capabilities take place to diversify European supply security and to counteract the Russian strategic aim of driving a wedge between Europe and the US, a major LNG exporter. Indeed, energy transit is the major determinant of the degree to which energy exports can be used as tools of foreign policy and influence by the exporter. For most of Europe, receiving LNG entails the building of new infrastructure and/or upgrading of existing infrastructure; the prohibitive costs associated mean that LNG has yet to become a truly competitive option in Europe.⁵¹

Additionally, the greatly varying and inconsistent gas risk exposure across EU member states means that a one-size-fits-all EU energy security policy would be extremely difficult to achieve.⁵² There are competing northern and southern strategies within the European energy market, and energy security means something different for West and East-Central Europe respectively.⁵³ This paper situates Denmark in the uncertain spot of bridging both Western and Eastern-Central European energy needs, and argues that using this perception of Denmark’s positioning in European energy security architecture can help to explain inconsistent Danish policies implemented in the past thirty years. Additionally, Denmark’s heavy investment into its

⁵⁰ Paillard 2011, p. 69.

⁵¹ Eser et al. 2019.

⁵² Le Coq and Paltseva 2011; Stefanova 2012.

⁵³ Stefanova 2012.

own renewable energy sector since the 1970s confirms Rickli's conclusion that investment by small states into clean technology makes them more energy secure by reducing their vulnerability to outside pressures.⁵⁴

Danish Policy

The most important theoretical concepts to understand before studying Danish foreign policy revolve around the formation of the small state mentality and its operationalization in both political and public discourses. Due to Denmark's relatively recent historical experiences with larger neighbors, explained in the earlier history section of this paper, Danish politics after the end of the Cold War continue to use the framework of these historical lessons and to apply them to experiences of the Cold War. Mouritzen and Runge Olesen categorize possible types of historical lessons as internalized or instrumental, and develop a luxury theory to explain the impact a state's freedom of action has upon the deployment of past geopolitics in contemporary political decisions.⁵⁵ This idea was expanded upon in a later argument that the assertive Danish attitude towards Russia of the 2000s could be attributed largely to Anders Fogh Rasmussen, the Danish prime minister from 2001 to 2009, and his personal internalization of his country's past geopolitics.⁵⁶ To this end, Farbøl identifies three types of narratives prevalent in Danish discourse (conflict, consensus, and protest narratives), using historicizations of Danish Cold War history, and explains their application by various Danish political figures, including Fogh Rasmussen, during major foreign policy events post-Cold War.⁵⁷

⁵⁴ Rickli 2014.

⁵⁵ Mouritzen and Runge Olesen 2010.

⁵⁶ Mellander and Mouritzen 2016.

⁵⁷ Farbøl 2017.

This historicization of Danish Cold War history was also found to have influenced and be further influenced by Denmark's shift from active internationalism to international activism, which was in part catalyzed by Denmark's larger allies (namely the US).⁵⁸ Active internationalism refers to an activist, multilateral tradition of Danish foreign policy from the 1980s through 2001, which sought primarily to preserve a balanced order in Denmark's neighborhood.⁵⁹ International activism refers to the post-2001 shift in Danish foreign policy, which instead prioritized bilateral relations and greater self-assertion.⁶⁰ These narrative frameworks in turn shaped Danish perceptions of Russian leaders and actions in the same time period, leading to overwhelmingly negative media coverage in Denmark of Russia during the 2000s and 2010s.⁶¹ Outside of discourse, Denmark's strong support of NATO and skepticism towards the EU, already covered in the earlier section on collective security, came from these utilizations of past geopolitics; similarly, Denmark's active role in developing its neighbors in the Baltic Sea Region does as well. Building up the Baltic countries helps Denmark provide a buffer zone between itself and a potentially aggressive Russia. Such aid also wins it friends in regional fora intended to deal with Baltic Sea Region issues.

Military Relations

The Berlin Wall, separating East Germany from West Germany, and the communist Eastern bloc from the capitalist Western one, came down in the fall of 1989; Lars Løkke Rasmussen, who would become the prime minister of Denmark twenty years later, was there with his wife when it did. It marked the real emergence of a new Europe that had already started

⁵⁸ Villaume 2008; Runge Olesen 2012.

⁵⁹ Brun Pedersen 2012.

⁶⁰ *ibid.*

⁶¹ Splidsboel Hansen 2010; Splidsboel Hansen 2018.

to take shape with the popular uprisings against communism in the preceding decades, and that would crystallize two years later with the breakup of the Soviet Union. One of fifteen former Soviet republics, the new Russian state thought that the new order in Europe was up for debate. Those in the West, primarily those aligned with NATO, did not.

Denmark had placed itself firmly in the NATO camp forty years earlier. The prime minister in 1989, Poul Schlüter (Conservative/Konservative, K), told Danes in his New Year's Eve address of that year, "The cohesion in the western, democratic world's defense alliance has been one of the essential prerequisites for the world now looking lighter than it was a few years ago."⁶² The following year, in his speech at the opening of the 1990-91 session of the parliament, he called upon his country to make its influence in the world count – small countries needed to take responsibility for the direction of the world and of Europe.⁶³ NATO was, for Denmark, the primary frame that would allow it to do so.

Denmark had learned during and leading up to World War II that it did not stand much of a fighting chance without a reliable alliance of friends around it, and during the Cold War it sought to cement its place in NATO as a valued and contributive member. Now, entering the 1990s and exiting the bipolarity of the Cold War threat landscape, it was unclear what NATO's existential purpose was now. Despite this ambiguity, Danish leadership continued to throw its support behind NATO throughout the 1990s. It was suggested in the early 1990s that Danish soldiers should be deployed to the former Soviet Union and provide assistance;⁶⁴ this was perhaps in light of the vicious civil war that had broken out in Yugoslavia, and of the Russian troops lingering in the Baltic countries even after they had achieved independence from the

⁶² Schlüter 1989.

⁶³ Schlüter 1990.

⁶⁴ Just 1992.

Soviet Union. Schlüter's conservative government was replaced by Poul Nyrup Rasmussen's left-leaning one in January 1993, but the rhetoric at the highest level didn't change.

Throughout the mid-90s, Nyrup Rasmussen (Social Democrats/Socialdemokratiet, S) continued to utilize the same rhetoric placing NATO at the center of the security architecture for Denmark and for Europe, as well as advocating for NATO's expansion eastward. At the parliamentary level, there was less unity about the wisdom of further expansion of the military alliance. In January 1994, Nyrup Rasmussen's minister of defense, Hans Hækkerup (S), allegedly threatened a new Cold War with Russia; the rapid responses by Nyrup Rasmussen and his foreign minister Niels Helveg Petersen (Danish Social Liberal Party/Radikale Venstre, RV) in denial of the threat are clear, even if the content of the supposed threat itself is not.⁶⁵ Over the next few years, members of parliament (MPs) belonging to both sides of the political spectrum questioned the effect of NATO expansion upon Russia's respective relationships with Denmark, Europe, and the West.

The Danish leadership continued to express support for the alliance's expansion in the face of rejection of this idea by the Russian leadership. In the aftermath of the Cold War, nominally no state was supposed to hold sway over how another state chose to align or which friends it chose to make; this does not, however, change the fact that Russia was signaling its discomfort with a close proximity to NATO, and these signals were ignored or not properly addressed. Danish experts argued at the time that NATO expansion risked stalling the demilitarization of the Baltic Sea region and of the Russian Kaliningrad region (bordering Poland and Lithuania), and in doing so risk isolating Russia and excluding it from European

⁶⁵ Kjærsgaard 1994; Nyrup Rasmussen 1994.

security structures.⁶⁶ NATO expansion further ran the risk of pushing Russia to withdraw from the START agreement, which both reduced and limited strategic offensive weapons. For the West, this would represent a lost opportunity to gain influence over Russian nuclear policy.

In 1992, the small southern Russian region of Chechnya formally broke away from the Russian Federation and became the independent Chechen Republic of Ichkeria. Because of its significant strategic and symbolic importance to the Russian leadership, then-Russian president Boris Yeltsin pushed back on the secession by supporting opposition forces in the small-scale civil war that broke out in Chechnya. The Russian military invaded in December 1994, apparently to restore order. This was the start of the First Chechen War, which lasted just under two years, and killed an estimated 18,500 to 80,000 Chechen civilians and 4,000 Russian soldiers, up to half of whom are believed to have been killed in just the first few days of fighting.⁶⁷

The effects of the Russian forces' brutality upon Russia's and Yeltsin's reputations among the international community and other Russian republics were strongly negative. In Denmark, support lay behind a political solution to the conflict. Shortly before the Russian military cut its losses and withdrew from Chechnya in August 1996, Danish MP Holger K. Nielsen (S) called upon his government to take responsibility and pressure the Russian government, adding, "It's embarrassing that the West has not placed greater pressure on the Russian government around the conflict in Chechnya. The conflict will be resolved not through Russian chauvinism and massive bombardments, but through political negotiations alone."⁶⁸ The actions of the Russian military were concerning in the West and did little to ease Western doubts

⁶⁶ Albrechtsen 1995.

⁶⁷ Human Rights Watch 1996; BBC 2000.

⁶⁸ Nielsen 1996.

about whether the new Russian state was truly on the path towards democracy. Military intervention was never considered an option in Denmark, though, despite disgust over the reports of high casualties and brutality coming out of Chechnya. Peace temporarily came to Chechnya soon after, with the signing of the Khasav'yurt peace accord on August 31, 1996.

The Danish Defense Ministry periodically tasks a Defense Commission (Forsvarskommissionen) with investigating and identifying potential threats or challenges that the country may be facing in the years to come, and then publishing a report summarizing the challenges and recommendations for the next defense mandate. The 1997 Defense Commission's report, which was titled *The defense of the future* and released in 1998, established the concept of indirect security as a key one to the defense of Denmark's interests going forward. Some of the core ideas behind this concept had already entered into practice in Danish foreign and economic policy earlier in the decade; this will be covered in later chapters. "Indirect security is, in its current scope, of qualitatively new meaning for Denmark. Denmark has engaged itself in a number of military assignments – most clearly in the former Yugoslavia – that in no way appear to pose a direct threat for Denmark. This is primarily because Denmark has a fundamental interest in the stability of the order which was established after the end of the Cold War, in that it gives a – historically speaking – exceptionally high degree of security," the report reads.⁶⁹

This concept helped bring Denmark's military into contact with Russian forces during the 1990s, as the report cited – Danish troops joined the UN peacekeeping efforts in the former Yugoslavia (primarily Croatia and Bosnia, at first) from 1993 to 2003. The political and military turmoil at home prevented Russia as a state actor from taking too active a role in the first wave

⁶⁹ Forsvarskommissionen 1998, p. 17.

of the Yugoslav Wars (1991-95), but a large number of Russian volunteers and mercenaries took part in the fighting on the ground during this time. Russia had, however, opposed a NATO bombing campaign in the Balkans at this time, mostly because it viewed such a NATO engagement in the heart of Europe a concerning precedent to set before Russia and the United States had had the opportunity to reconcile and clarify their new strategic relationship.⁷⁰

Only a few years passed before war broke out again in the former Yugoslavia, this time in Kosovo in the summer of 1998 when Serbian government forces clashed with Kosovan students. Kosovo sought independence from Serbia; Serbia sought to hold on to Kosovo, for historically symbolic reasons. NATO established a Kosovo Force (KFOR) in June 1999, and less than a week later the Danish parliament resolved to deploy Danish soldiers in support of KFOR.⁷¹ In February of that year, Danish MPs belonging to the Socialist People's Party (Socialistisk Folkeparti, SF) had asked that Nyrup Rasmussen's government, among other things, ensure that future out-of-area operations by NATO only take place if the UNSC had issued a mandate.⁷² Nyrup Rasmussen chose to remain in line with his active foreign policy. A month later, NATO began its three-month bombing campaign against Yugoslavia. These three months were NATO's first offensive war, contrasting with its perennially stated purpose of being a purely defensive alliance, and they took place without a true legal justification by the UN Security Council.

This was because of Russia – on the same grounds that Russia had opposed NATO action in the mid-90s, it was again arguing that “the aggressive military action unleashed by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) against a sovereign State was a real threat to international

⁷⁰ Glenny 1996.

⁷¹ Forsvarsministeriet 2020.

⁷² Nielsen et al. 1999.

peace and security, and grossly violated the key provisions of the United Nations Charter”.⁷³

Kosovo, as would be demonstrated several times over in years to come, also has a special significance for Russia; its relationship to Serbia can represent a sort of analog to what Chechnya is to Russia. A successful intervention by foreign powers on behalf of Kosovo, and subsequent independence, set a potentially dangerous precedent for future developments in the Chechen bid for independence. The NATO intervention in Kosovo was a watershed moment in post-Cold War Europe and in the formation of West-Russia relations, and Denmark was a participant, despite lacking political consensus at home about the intervention.

While these incompatible expectations were playing out at a very international level, Denmark was also facing post-war military reorientation at home, in the Baltic Sea region. Perhaps naturally, due to the region being Denmark’s home neighborhood, history played a larger role in military matters here than elsewhere. Peter Skaarup, an MP belonging to the Danish People’s Party (Dansk Folkeparti, DF), asked foreign minister Niels Helveg Petersen in April 1998 about an alleged long-standing agreement with Russia that no foreign troops be allowed on the island of Bornholm, made after the Soviet Union agreed to leave the island again in 1946. Helveg Petersen denied that such an agreement had ever existed and added, “The end of the Cold War has fundamentally changed the security policy relationships in the Baltic Sea region. Changing Danish governments have continually emphasized a contribution to détente in that part of Europe. This has over time come to express itself in different ways, including through limitations on military activity in concrete situations.”⁷⁴

⁷³ United Nations Security Council 1999.

⁷⁴ Helveg Petersen 1998.

However, Skaarup appears to either have been truly convinced of this agreement's existence, or truly determined to stir up trouble in the parliament; either way, he asked the same question to Helveg Petersen three additional times over the following year.⁷⁵ It is not fully clear from the questions what the source of Skaarup's concern was, but his insistence on the agreement's existence (based upon a claim by Russian ambassador Alexander Chepurin) seemingly indicates at the very least a general anxiety that Russia could still be wielding influence over Danish military alignment and geostrategic interests.

At the same time, certain quarters of Danish politics were voicing their opposition to NATO expansion to the east, specifically to the Baltic countries. They feared consequences ranging from the halting of Russia's nuclear disarmament to the spread of nationalism within Russia itself.⁷⁶ Nyrup Rasmussen did not share their concerns. He continued throughout the late 1990s to advocate for EU and NATO expansion to Central and Eastern Europe, particularly to the three Baltic countries Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. Regarding NATO expansion, he said that its door to new members must continue to be held open;⁷⁷ regarding EU expansion, he went as far as to assert that the EU, rather than NATO, was "the only way" to peace and security in Europe, so that it could anchor the new democracies forming in Eastern and Central Europe.⁷⁸

Poland became a NATO member in March 1999, and the Baltic countries joined five years later in March 2004, becoming the first (and remain, as of May 2020, the only) former Soviet states to join the organization. Denmark's strategic plan for the Baltic Sea Region at the close of the 1990s and beginning of the 2000s, therefore, was to aid in the military linkage of the

⁷⁵ Skaarup 1999.

⁷⁶ Albrechtsen 1995b; Albrechtsen 1996a.

⁷⁷ Nyrup Rasmussen 1996b.

⁷⁸ Nyrup Rasmussen 1996a.

Baltic countries to NATO, prior to their actual accession to the treaty. From 1962 to 2002, NATO's multinational Baltic command (BALTAP) was based out of Karup, in central Jylland (the Danish peninsula). Hans Hækkerup, the defense minister who had previously suggested a new cold war with Russia, suggested now that this command be used to help implement the Partnership for Peace (PFP) program.

PFP is intended to be a trust-building measure between NATO members and non-members in the rest of Europe, including both those who do and do not aspire to eventual NATO membership. Poland and the Baltic countries were all PFP members prior to their NATO accession; Russia itself is a member and has been since June 1994.⁷⁹ However, fears in some sectors over creating too polarizing a security climate in the Baltic Sea region found controversy here as well. Keld Albrechtsen, an MP who represented the far-left socialist party Unity List (Enhedslisten, EL), was responsible for voicing some of the warier viewpoints towards the new post-Cold War order throughout the 1990s. Albrechtsen accused Hækkerup of trying to backdoor Sweden and Finland into NATO while also moving NATO closer to Russian borders, all under the pretext of peacekeeping exercises and operations in the Baltic Sea region.⁸⁰ Albrechtsen feared that Denmark's posturing in the region, and its role in linking the Baltic countries even further to NATO, would be interpreted as "aggressive and Russia-hostile".⁸¹

BALTAP was phased out in the early 2000s, and was for all intents and purposes succeeded by the Multinational Corps Northeast, set up as a joint German-Danish-Polish command in 1999 at Szczecin in northwestern Poland. Albrechtsen, joined by his Unity List

⁷⁹ NATO suspended all cooperation with Russia in 2014, following its illegal annexation of the Crimean Peninsula from Ukraine.

⁸⁰ Albrechtsen 1996b.

⁸¹ Albrechtsen 1996c.

colleague Søren Søndergaard, later called the establishment of this corps, as well as the PFP program, “poison for a general détente in all of Europe, and [they] are seen by Russia as a military encirclement of Russia”.⁸² Nyrup Rasmussen continued to speak on the importance of increased Danish presence at the international level, and also contributed significant Danish support towards the Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe, the OSCE.

In the spring of 1999, Copenhagen hosted the Conference on Regional Cooperation in an Enlarged Europe. At the opening of the conference, Poul Nyrup Rasmussen took the opportunity to mention the experiences of the Nordic and Baltic countries in having learned to live with big neighbors; this, he said, was a convincing argument in favor of regional cooperation.⁸³ Russia was clearly one of these big neighbors, for both of these regions. Regional security was becoming a topic of increasing significance to Danish leadership at the close of the 1990s; in terms of ongoing conflicts, Russia was also considered by Denmark to be an important force in ensuring regional peace in Kosovo, still playing out at the time. In this same speech, Nyrup Rasmussen stressed the Danish commitment to deploying soft security – preventive diplomacy and long-term cooperation – alongside the military focus of hard security, which he found to be a reductive view of security as a concept. He also cited the EU as the “key player” in European security.

However, when the Treaty on the European Union was ratified seven years earlier in Maastricht, referendum results in Denmark only allowed the country to ratify the treaty and thus its EU membership with four reservations, or opt-outs. One of these was the defense opt-out, meaning Denmark cannot participate in common EU defense efforts. In May of 1999, Nyrup

⁸² Albrechtsen and Søndergaard 2000.

⁸³ Nyrup Rasmussen 1999a.

Rasmussen defended this reservation as a Danish rejection of the construction of a common European defense in competition with NATO and outside of NATO.⁸⁴ The OSCE and UN were also named essential security actors. Regardless of what Nyrup Rasmussen's true feelings were about what role the EU should play in European security, the defense opt-out rendered any of that irrelevant. Denmark now had to put all its stock into the other available actors. With the Russian bombing of Chechnya in August 1999 and re-invasion in October, this most immediately became the OSCE.

In the intervening years between the end of the First Chechen War in 1996 and the beginning of the Second Chechen War in 1999, power vacuum conditions in Chechnya gave rise to armed struggles between competing warlords. Violence and crime proliferated in the small republic and spilled over into neighboring Dagestan with the month-long Dagestan War in August 1999. Vladimir Putin, at the time virtually unknown across the country, was named President Yeltsin's prime minister and eventual successor as president almost immediately prior to the outbreak of this war. Then, over a two-week period in September, Russia "was hit by a series of bomb attacks that blew apart mostly suburban apartment blocks, claiming the lives of 305 and injuring over 1,000 in Moscow and the provincial cities of Volgodonsk and Buynaksk".⁸⁵ The Russian government blamed the attacks on Chechen terrorists; however, a number of eyewitness accounts and journalists connected the attacks to the FSB, Russia's security service.⁸⁶

There are two primary lines of reasoning for the outbreak of the Second Chechen War, the events of which gave Putin high visibility and allowed him to prove his strength to the

⁸⁴ Nyrup Rasmussen 1999b.

⁸⁵ Judah 2013, p. 31.

⁸⁶ Judah 2013; Satter 2016.

country. The first is the official Russian version of events, which argues that federal troops were fighting to restore constitutional order in the North Caucasus and prevent a spiral of violence from reaching other republics of the Russian Federation. The second is that Chechnya became a scapegoat and foundational brick in the rise to power of an unpopular new prime minister. Either way, the new war was a brutal one from the outset – the Chechen capital Grozny was seized and essentially leveled by February 2000. The international community was quick to condemn Boris Yeltsin and his military.

The OSCE held a summit in Istanbul in November 1999. Helle Degn, a Danish social democrat who had served as the Vice President of the Organization from 1994-98 and was now serving as the president of the OSCE's Parliamentary Assembly, gave an address in which she identified the conflicts in Chechnya and in Nagorno-Karabakh (a disputed territory between Armenia and Azerbaijan) as proof of the fragility of peace in Europe.⁸⁷ This detail is of note because it reflects a larger Danish acceptance of the North and South Caucasus regions, the latter of which also includes Georgia, as part of Europe. This acceptance is not shared throughout all of Western Europe or by Russia, and the debate has significant implications upon the areas of operation for NATO, the EU, and the OSCE itself. In his own address to the summit, Nyrup Rasmussen stated, "Russia is an invaluable partner in European security. We reaffirm our position on the territorial integrity of Russia. And there should be no doubt about our attitude to terrorism. But we also call on Russia to redress the tragic situation in Chechnya without delay...What we see and hear about the military activity, is completely out of proportions."⁸⁸ He

⁸⁷ Degn 1999.

⁸⁸ Nyrup Rasmussen 1999c.

was one of a number of other Western leaders to openly criticize the actions of Russian troops in Chechnya at the summit.

Yeltsin responded forcefully. “You have no right to criticize Russia over Chechnya,” he argued. “I am convinced that stability and security in Europe cannot be considered without taking Russia into account... We all already know to what disproportionate consequences [humanitarian] intervention can lead – suffice to recall USA-led NATO aggression against Yugoslavia.”⁸⁹ He accused the other members of the OSCE of “mutual recriminations and moralizing”, and then stormed out of the summit early. Russia saw Chechnya as its right to self-assertion as a security actor. The statements made by Danish representatives at this time reiterated the value they saw in Russia as a security actor, but Chechnya was viewed as a security threat and a red flag for Russian participation in the European security order.

Between Chechnya and 9/11, the military component of Denmark’s relationship with Russia also concerned a large part of the Danish kingdom itself – Greenland. Although autonomous and practicing limited self-government, Greenland has indeed been a part of the Danish kingdom since the early nineteenth century. Its large size and proximity to the Arctic have given it high strategic significance to Denmark and in turn granted greater strategic importance to Denmark in the eyes of larger powers. Since World War II, Greenland has been home to a sizeable American military presence, following an agreement by a rogue Danish diplomat with the US government.⁹⁰ Today, the US Air Force’s Thule base in northern Greenland is the main military fixture on the island.

⁸⁹ Yeltsin 1999.

⁹⁰ After the Nazi occupation of Denmark on 9 April 1940, Denmark’s ambassador to the United States, Henrik Kauffmann, made an unauthorized agreement with the US, which allowed American forces into Greenland to protect the Danish colonies there from Nazi Germany. The Nazi-protectorate Danish government refused to

In the 1990s, this translated to concerns that Denmark and Greenland, especially the Greenlandic people, would be dragged into a US-Russia arms race. The advanced radar capabilities at Thule meant that if the US decided to build out its arsenal of nuclear weapons to eliminate the Russian missile threat, Greenland would immediately gain immense military strategic value. Keld Albrechtsen argued in parliament that Greenland risked becoming a hostage in a conflict between NATO and the US on one side and Russia on the other, without any regard to the actual wishes of either Greenland's elected politicians or population.⁹¹ This mirrored Danish and Greenland concerns twenty years later, when Donald Trump tried to buy Greenland from Denmark without any consideration for, among many other things, the population of 56,000 living in the territory.

The Danish-American friendship and military cooperation in Greenland often led to more concerns in Denmark than were caused by Russian activities in the region. In the fall of 1999, the US was considering upgrading its missile defense, which included modernizing the Thule base – such upgrades would violate the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty, to which the US was a signatory. Violating the treaty provoked a sharp response from Russia. Holger K. Nielsen told foreign minister Niels Helveg Petersen that the American recognition of its treaty violation “was in itself deeply problematic, but it will put the Danish government under pressure.”⁹² Helveg Petersen clarified that the US and Russia had agreed to make an exception or adaption to the treaty. Nielsen was also, however, concerned over the “growing tendency [in the US] towards apathy about international agreements, a tendency to want to do things themselves”.⁹³

recognize the agreement and charged Kauffmann with treason. After the country's liberation in 1946, the treaty was officially ratified.

⁹¹ Albrechtsen 1998.

⁹² Nielsen 1999.

⁹³ Ibid.

Albrechtsen also continued to be critical of his government's partisan role in international conflicts. "We live in an illusion if we here in the West imagine that Western great powers can have a monopoly on interpreting international law, but, say, China and Russia cannot," he argued. "If NATO and the EU, in the years to come, reserve for themselves the right to decide when and where there must be military interventions, then it has been opened up for other countries to do the same."⁹⁴

One of the many things altered by September 11, 2001, was the short-term relationship between Russia and the West. Putin was very quick in reaching out to Bush to express his sympathy and offer Russia's concrete support to the US in the immediate aftermath of 9/11, building on support he had already been offering to the West in fighting terrorism since his ascension to power.⁹⁵ Poul Nyrup Rasmussen was also supportive of the US, of working with Russia against terrorism, and of the idea that 9/11 could bring together old enemies.⁹⁶ The war in Chechnya was still ongoing – this was precisely why Putin was so committed to establishing terrorism as a common cause against which the US and Europe, including Russia, could unite. Chechen terrorism – or, according to critics of the Russian government, allegedly Chechen terrorism – was still being used to justify the war in Chechnya. Putin hoped to swap out the West's criticism of Russian actions in Chechnya for sympathy and support, by successfully demonstrating that Chechen Islamic terrorism plagued Russia just as much as Middle Eastern Islamic terrorism plagued the US.

This succeeded to a limited extent in Denmark, causing a paradoxical situation wherein the Danish parliament and government continued to condemn Russian human rights abuses in

⁹⁴ Albrechtsen and Søndergaard 2000.

⁹⁵ Hill 2002.

⁹⁶ Nyrup Rasmussen 2001.

Chechnya, yet in the case of the government refused to raise the issue through formal channels. The new foreign minister in Denmark, Per Stig Møller, responded to criticism by Danish MPs for not doing so by saying that, although Russian behavior was upsetting, the government would not raise the issue because the situation with Russia changed after 9/11; this response was met with renewed criticism.⁹⁷ Somewhat comically, the criticism raised in the Danish parliament by Albrechtsen and Søndergaard referred to the fact that Stig Møller had himself been a part of a group of MPs that wrote to his own predecessor as foreign minister, demanding that Denmark bring charges against Russia in the European Court of Human Rights for what was going on in Chechnya. The intersection of Danish military interests and values-driven Danish foreign policy in the 2000s over the War on Terror revealed a prioritization of the former over the latter.

The NATO mission in the War on Terror was to defend the borders of the alliance. This was a mission to which the new Danish prime minister, Anders Fogh Rasmussen (Left/Venstre, V), heartily cosigned following his election in November 2001. Fogh Rasmussen is famously – or infamously – a critic of Russia, to put it lightly, and eventually left his post as prime minister to serve as General Secretary of NATO, from 2009 to 2014. He was friends with George W. Bush and shared with him a similar outlook; he is a member of the deceptively-named Left party, which is actually conservative liberal. While he was an active supporter of the War on Terror and on military cooperation with Russia in this endeavor, as well as closer NATO cooperation with Russia, he also actively pursued interests that Russia had pushed against for years. Fogh Rasmussen was, and still is today, a passionate advocate for NATO expansion, particularly to countries in Russia's neighborhood. He also advocated for a continued US military presence in Europe. At the November 2002 NATO summit in Prague, seven states were invited to begin

⁹⁷ Stig Møller 2002.

accession talks: Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia. With the exception of Slovenia, all these countries were part of the Warsaw Pact; three of them were former Soviet republics. At the same summit, Finland, Sweden, Ukraine, and Georgia were reaffirmed as non-member contributors to NATO.

Fogh Rasmussen spoke at the summit and, in commenting on the historic NATO membership of former Soviet republics, said, “Let me stress: Our enlargement is not directed against Russia. It is an effort to heal and integrate Europe. We all have an interest in this process. Russia will also benefit.”⁹⁸ The following day, he spoke to the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC). Georgian president Eduard Shevardnadze also gave an address, in which he argued that Georgia’s future as an independent nation hinged upon continued NATO’s eastward expansion; the membership invitations to Romania and Bulgaria, therefore, were welcome developments, as they expanded Black Sea representation in NATO’s area of operations.⁹⁹ These were ideas with which Fogh Rasmussen agreed. He continued to present NATO’s eastward expansion as a matter of getting the new democracies in Central and Eastern Europe “safely inside our Western cooperation organizations”.¹⁰⁰ This clearly implies safety *from* something; the context indicates that it is Russia from which these new democracies must seek protection.

Fogh Rasmussen explained his commitment to multilateralism as “the simple reason that, as individual nations, we are in no position to stand alone in matters of international security”.¹⁰¹ He also continually invoked Denmark’s 1864 military defeat to Germany. History remained an important tool for him. As late as 2008, the Danish military was reportedly still

⁹⁸ Fogh Rasmussen 2002.

⁹⁹ Shevardnadze 2002.

¹⁰⁰ Fogh Rasmussen 2003a.

¹⁰¹ Fogh Rasmussen 2003b.

using anti-Russian/Soviet/communist names and scenarios for basic training scenarios, examples of which include: “Red alliance has entered Danish territory”; “Russia, Poland and other allies have united against Denmark because the Slavic minorities residing in Denmark have been discriminated against”; and “Russia, Poland and other allies have invaded parts of South Sjælland and Lolland-Falster”.¹⁰² It should be noted that Denmark has never been home to a sizeable Slavic minority population – in the first quarter of 2020, less than 2% of the overall population originated from a Slavic country.¹⁰³

The lens through which Fogh Rasmussen viewed the role Denmark should be playing internationally was scarred by Denmark’s past experiences with its neighbors; in the mid-2000s, neighborhood policy became an important component of his security policy. From the mid-2000s until the end of his tenure as prime minister, Fogh Rasmussen also began to heavily link energy security to national and European security; this will be analyzed in a later chapter. He continued to hold, however, that securitizing moves being made in Europe by NATO, whether expansion of membership or expansion of missile defenses, were not threats to Russia.

Russia’s 2008 invasion of Georgia was not met with a military response by Western Europe, but Fogh Rasmussen’s rhetoric towards Russia changed markedly after the fact. He also pointed to the war as a case for why the EU needed to strengthen its foreign and security policy.¹⁰⁴ By the beginning of 2009, the primary military challenges for Denmark remained the pirates in Somalia and the ongoing war in Afghanistan. Fogh Rasmussen, however, still made a point of mentioning in his New Year’s Eve address to the nation that Danish soldiers and police

¹⁰² Dyrby Paulsen 2008.

¹⁰³ *Danmarks Statistik* 2020.

¹⁰⁴ Fogh Rasmussen 2008.

officers were deployed to Georgia, to ensure peace there.¹⁰⁵ This is indicative of where he continued to perceive Russia as a threat, and which type of threat was most salient to Denmark. Fogh Rasmussen stepped down from his position as prime minister a few months later and took up the role of General Secretary of NATO. He took his focus on Russia with him – the first speech he delivered in the position, in September 2009, was titled “NATO and Russia: A New Beginning”.

His successor back home in Denmark, Lars Løkke Rasmussen (V; no relation to either of the previous Rasmussens to also serve as prime minister), took a very different approach to Russia and to Danish security – this approach will be more closely detailed in later chapters. However, a clear theme that ran throughout all his policies across the board during his time as prime minister (2009-11 and 2015-19) was a strengthened focus on neighborhood policy. In 2010, the Danish military was actively engaging in bilateral security cooperation with Ukraine, with a focus on three areas: strengthening security dialogue; strengthening Ukraine’s ability to participate in international peacekeeping; and strengthening democratic control using Ukraine’s armed forces.¹⁰⁶ However, expenditure on military aid to Ukraine had been decreased by over half from 2009 to 2010 (6.3m DKK to 2.5m DKK), and was expected to be decreased even further (2.5m DKK to 1.75m DKK) from 2010 to 2011.¹⁰⁷ Rasmussen did not at this time perceive Russia to be a military threat, so he focused Danish military efforts elsewhere. This was in line with the recommendations of the 2008 Defense Commission, this time titled *Danish defense, Global engagement*.¹⁰⁸ Løkke Rasmussen did not have much time to implement his own

¹⁰⁵ Fogh Rasmussen 2009.

¹⁰⁶ Forsvarskommandoen 2010.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Forsvarskommissionen 2009.

policies, however. He lost the October 2011 election and was replaced as prime minister by Helle Thorning-Schmidt (S).

Thorning-Schmidt was a social democrat on the opposite side of the political spectrum and, incidentally, Denmark's first female prime minister. Thorning-Schmidt announced in her opening address to Parliament that, though Denmark must continue to make a marked contribution to international missions, it "should not just be in the hard military missions. We must also take responsibility for the soft security. Here, Denmark has very much to offer."¹⁰⁹ Russia featured relatively little in speeches she made during her tenure as prime minister, and she appeared not to consider it much of a military or security threat, even in light of the ongoing illegal Russian occupation of two Georgian territories. When asked why the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) allowed the sale of a certain weapon to Russia but not to Georgia, minister Villy Søvndal (SF) explained that, according to Denmark's "reluctant" weapons export policy, the MFA had not assessed the sale of the weapon in question to be at risk for prolonging or escalating the conflict in Russia.¹¹⁰

In 2012, Thorning-Schmidt announced, "We are reducing our defense spending on both sides of the Atlantic as part of our fiscal consolidation. This raises hard questions about burden sharing and our capacity to confront future security challenges."¹¹¹ This did not, however, reflect a rejection of transatlantic cooperation – in the same address, she highlighted Afghanistan and Libya as "examples of how NATO has adapted from Cold War confrontation in Europe to new types of conflicts outside Europe".¹¹² Denmark was still committed to its military alliances; it

¹⁰⁹ Thorning-Schmidt 2011.

¹¹⁰ Søvndal 2012.

¹¹¹ Thorning-Schmidt 2012.

¹¹² Ibid.

was simply following the NATO line focusing on out-of-operations security. And at the time, Russia was not posing an active military threat to countries west of the Black Sea.

In November 2013, hundreds of thousands of Ukrainians took to the streets of Kyiv to protest their government's suspension of the signing of the planned Association and Free Trade Agreements between Ukraine and the EU. They, along with thousands of others in cities across the country, remained in the streets until February, when the protests culminated in the 2014 Ukrainian Revolution. Pro-Russian president Viktor Yanukovych was ousted, and the democratic amendments made to the constitution a decade prior as part of the Orange Revolution were reinstated. These developments were highly concerning to Putin, who had also been concerned by the original color revolutions in the mid-2000s (the others were Georgia's Rose Revolution and Kyrgyzstan's Tulip Revolution). A week later, Russian soldiers without identifying insignia captured the Ukrainian peninsula of Crimea; the Russian Federation announced Crimea's formal incorporation in March 2014. Fighting also began in Eastern Ukraine that spring between Ukrainian government forces and pro-Russian separatist forces, later joined by Russian troops. This armed conflict is still ongoing as of May 2020.

Ukraine triggered a massive reorientation of European security interests. After the spring of 2014, NATO pivoted its focus back to collective defense in Europe. The EU, alongside the US and Canada, implemented several rounds of sanctions against Russia for its actions. NATO augmented the strength of its Baltic Air Policing mission, established in 2004, and Denmark deployed fighter jets in support of this augmentation. On the 150th anniversary of the defeat of 1864, Helle Thorning-Schmidt invoked for the first time the memory of the defeat as the catalyst

for Denmark's active foreign policy today.¹¹³ This was additionally the first year that she tied energy security to European conventional security in one of her speeches.¹¹⁴ The old concept of indirect security from the 1990s also began to feature more strongly in her rhetoric after Ukraine. "We live in an uneasy time. And we have essentially two options. Either we help resolve the crises that are out in the world. Or, we bury our heads and hope that they don't hit us. I'm not in doubt. We need to act," she said at the opening of the 2014-15 parliamentary session. "We need to fight outside for our security at home."¹¹⁵

Thorning-Schmidt was voted out of office in June 2015, and Lars Løkke Rasmussen returned to the seat of prime minister for a second time, this time until June 2019. However, he maintained a similar foreign policy to Thorning-Schmidt with regards to Ukraine and continued to support a political solution to the conflict there. One key difference in policy was that Løkke Rasmussen reinstated the defense funding that Thorning-Schmidt had cut some years earlier.¹¹⁶ Increases in defense spending came following the deployment of Russian Iskander missiles in October 2016 to Kaliningrad, which could reach Copenhagen; it also followed an incident in 2015 in which the Russian ambassador in Denmark "threatened to aim nuclear missiles at Danish warships if Denmark joined [a European missile defense system]".¹¹⁷ It was clear from his and his government's rhetoric that he wanted Denmark to be able to take better care of itself, rather than rely solely on powerful friends. This theme carried on even after he left office again in 2019 – when President Trump attacked Denmark on Twitter for not spending enough on NATO contributions, Løkke Rasmussen tweeted back, "And – as i told You at the NATO Summit in

¹¹³ Thorning-Schmidt 2014a.

¹¹⁴ Thorning-Schmidt 2014b.

¹¹⁵ Thorning-Schmidt 2014c.

¹¹⁶ Løkke Rasmussen 2016.

¹¹⁷ Gronholt-Pedersen and Jensen 2017.

Bruxelles last year – we have had (proportionally) exactly the same numbers of casualties in Afghanistan as US. We always stands [sic] firm and ready – so we will not accept that our defence willingness is only about percentages.”¹¹⁸

Following the 2016 NATO summit in Warsaw, Denmark also agreed to deploy several hundred soldiers to Estonia as part of the new Enhanced Forward Presence (EFP) deterrence measure, intended to act as a tripwire of any new Russian aggression against the Baltic countries. Danish military buildup in the Baltic Sea region continues to be a staple fixture of Danish defense policy, especially as Russian military planes continually violated Danish airspace and, in several cases, simulated attacks on Danish targets in the years following 2014.

Lars Løkke Rasmussen’s economic policy towards Russia during his first stint as prime minister arguably prioritized commercial and diplomatic interests over geopolitical concerns. This spilled over into some of his security policy towards Russia in the mid-2010s. In 2017, MP Mette Frederiksen (S) called on him to do more to link the concepts of energy and national security in the face of the impending Nord Stream 2 pipeline.¹¹⁹ After she replaced him as prime minister two years later, the pipeline was forced through and she was left to deal with what she had perceived to be a threat to national security, years in the past.

Løkke Rasmussen’s minister of defense, Claus Hjort Frederiksen, also acknowledged at the same time that Denmark’s preoccupation for the past number of years with fighting terrorists meant that attention now needed to be turned back to the new threat landscape in Denmark’s neighborhood. This acknowledgement came in response to Mette Frederiksen’s colleague from the Social Democrats, Peter Hummelgaard Thomsen, arguing for the government to stop

¹¹⁸ Løkke Rasmussen 2019.

¹¹⁹ Frederiksen 2017.

separating commercial and security assessments when it came to Russia, specifically with regard to the growing threat of cyber attacks from Russia.¹²⁰ A few months later, Hjørt Frederiksen admitted that Russia had been hacking the Danish military for over two years, and that it was very likely that it was the Russian military intelligence-affiliated group Fancy Bear.¹²¹

The primary challenge of Danish military relations with Russia, looking ahead from 2020, will most likely take place in the Arctic. Norway, Russia, and the US are the actors who so far have taken the most steps as far as military armament in the High North go; however, increasing tensions, especially around areas such as the Norwegian island Svalbard, mean that NATO and the Arctic coast states are having to rewire their military strategies in the region. Denmark has reaffirmed its commitment to minimizing conflict in the Arctic, and perceives the Russian buildup there as largely defensive, but maintains that Russian developments also increasingly build out the capacity for offensive operations.¹²² Peaceful cooperation in the Arctic will ask Danish leadership to reconcile commercial energy and shipping interests, environmental preservation interests, issues of political representation with the Greenlandic people and self-government, and security interests that balance the needs and signals of a very multipolar security community. Greenland's strategic military value to the growing importance of the Arctic provided the first major international issue Mette Frederiksen had to deal with after her election in the summer 2020; the quickly growing military significance of the Arctic is likely to ensure that it will not be the last.

¹²⁰ Hummelgaard Thomsen and Hjørt Frederiksen 2017.

¹²¹ Borre and Larsen 2017.

¹²² Samuelsen 2018.

Political Relations

The broad strokes of Denmark and Russia's military relationship capture their political relationship as well. Stated commitments by Danish leadership to either bilateralism or multilateralism more often than not refer back to the EU either way; in the case of certain Danish leaders and indeed most European politicians, NATO was also considered to be a political organization. Denmark took issue with human rights violations and unsuccessful democratic reforms in Russia. In Danish discourse, Europe was often framed as an institution rather than a geography. These were the defining political issues that guided their relationship, including a poor bilateral relationship for much of the 2000s.

By 1989, the dissolution process of the Soviet Union was already well on its way. In the three Baltic Soviet republics of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, anti-Soviet and anti-communist protests began several years earlier, as they did across much of the Soviet Union. Mikhail Gorbachev's perestroika and glasnost reform movements of the 1980s had the unintended consequence of releasing nationalistic sentiments in the republics that had for decades been repressed by Soviet military power. In the Baltics, protests at this time were directed against the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact of fifty years earlier, which was responsible for secretly signing over the Baltic states to the Soviet sphere of influence and paving the way for their illegal annexation by the Soviet Union in 1940. Denmark, however, was at this time still prioritizing a bilateral relationship with the Soviet Union. This prevented it from fully supporting the independence of its Baltic neighbors, despite the local governments at this point being more in tune with the local majorities than the central Soviet government.¹²³

¹²³ Runge Olesen 2014.

However, this non-recognition policy was officially dropped at the beginning of 1990. Politically, there was still disagreement in Denmark over how to best support Baltic independence. The political right took a hawkish approach that emphasized putting pressure on the Soviet government, “focused on the historical wrongs inflicted upon the Baltic countries by the Soviet Union and expected good Soviet behavior as proof that it was no longer the brutal great power it had been in 1940”.¹²⁴ This expectation carried on through Danish and greater Western perceptions of Russia throughout the 1990s. The dovish left supported détente and feared taking any actions that could hurt democratic reform movements within the USSR;¹²⁵ these concerns were resolved at the end of 1991 with the Soviet Union’s implosion, and the new Baltic countries could now enjoy Denmark’s full political backing. Denmark was one of the first countries to establish diplomatic relations with all three new Baltic states. Of note and indicative of the intentions (based in the indirect security concept) behind Denmark’s strong support of Baltic independence was that Poul Schlüter’s government did not express the same level of support for the very similar Nagorno-Karabakh independence movement taking place at the same time in Azerbaijan, also a former Soviet republic.¹²⁶

In December 1991, the leaders of Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus undersigned the creation of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), which would replace the USSR and which prompted Gorbachev to resign as President of the Soviet Union. The Danish prime minister Poul Schlüter (Conservative/Konservative, K) was overall very optimistic about the democratic, reform-minded direction that the former Soviet republics, including the new Russian state, were taking. Most of the Western world was as well, as it signaled a hopeful end to the Cold War, but

¹²⁴ Runge Olesen 2014, p. 90-91.

¹²⁵ Runge Olesen 2014.

¹²⁶ Glønborg 1992.

Denmark had specific interests tied to increased openness in the Baltic Sea region. Schlüter prioritized both solid international frameworks and assumption of responsibility by individual states.¹²⁷ The Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS) was formed in 1992, with Russia as one of the ten original members. The intention was to strengthen regional cooperation on three long-term priority areas: Regional Identity, Sustainable and Prosperous Region, and Safe and Secure Region.¹²⁸

These were positive developments in regional cooperation, but it did not take long for friction points to arise in Denmark's relationship to the new Russian state. The third of the CBSS' priorities, Safe and Secure Region, was necessitated to a significant degree by the fallout of the Soviet Union's breakup; one of its main focuses is upon human trafficking and fighting cross-border crime. In the early 1990s, Denmark experienced increases in Russian smugglers, who were granted asylum after being caught smuggling, and Russian human traffickers using the Danish-German border and the Kastrup Airport in Copenhagen.¹²⁹ The head of the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) said in December 1993 that refugees coming from the Baltic countries or from Russia had no reason to claim refugee status, and should therefore be turned away at the border.¹³⁰ The Danish and Swedish police were reportedly concerned that many of these refugees were traveling with the help of Russian organized crime groups linked to the international mafia.¹³¹

Russian espionage in Denmark was another continuous point of tension in the countries' political relationship throughout the 1990s. Already in 1992, Danish intelligence (PET) was

¹²⁷ Schlüter 1992.

¹²⁸ Council of Baltic Sea States 2020.

¹²⁹ Adam Møller 1993; Grove 1993.

¹³⁰ Kjærsgaard 1993.

¹³¹ Kjærsgaard 1994.

reporting that Russian spies were active in Denmark, and that this should be considered an expression of strain in the relationship, as well as considered in light of Russia's recent application to the European Council.¹³² Keld Albrechtsen (Unity List/Enhedslisten, EL), an MP who raised a high number of questions about Russia in the parliament throughout the 1990s, asked the government to convince Russia that it was "unnecessary and unwise" for GRU, the Russian military intelligence service, to increase its activity in Western Europe in response to the planned expansion of NATO; evidently, a Moscow newspaper had announced that GRU received orders to do so.¹³³ This was in November 1995; in the spring of 1996, the Russian embassy in Copenhagen installed security cameras that monitored the surrounding streets. The surveillance made Danes living in the area uncomfortable, and the Copenhagen police received several complaints about the cameras. The police responded that they did not have any information to provide about the function of the cameras, because they were a part of the embassy's own security systems.¹³⁴ And, as MP Anne Baastrup (Socialist People's Party/Socialistisk Folkeparti, SF) pointed out, there had not been the need for "such indiscreet and comprehensive surveillance" prior to the spring of 1996.¹³⁵

Before leaving office at the end of January 1993, Schlüter commented cryptically on "worrying tendencies [in the former Soviet Union, including Russia] that contain meaningful risk for democratic development".¹³⁶ He possibly meant Boris Yeltsin's reforms by decree the year before, a practice which allowed the Russian president to bypass the government's legislative bodies. Either way, Schlüter and his right-leaning conservative government were replaced a few

¹³² Espersen 1992.

¹³³ Albrechtsen 1995.

¹³⁴ Baastrup 1997.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Schlüter 1993.

weeks later by new prime minister Poul Nyrup Rasmussen (Social Democrats/Socialdemokratiet, S) and his left-leaning government. After the failed coup against Yeltsin in October 1993, Nyrup Rasmussen expressed his government's support for Yeltsin as "the best guarantee for the [political and economic] reform course" in Russia.¹³⁷ A little more than a year later, Yeltsin sent Russian troops into Chechnya. Nyrup Rasmussen also announced that Denmark would be on the frontline of bringing Central European, Eastern European, and the Baltic countries into the EU.¹³⁸ These were two developments that would soon converge and bring Denmark and Russia into a realm of political tension, and at times political conflict, for the next decade.

Russian military actions in Chechnya were infamously brutal, and a high number of human rights abuses were committed by Russian soldiers on Chechen civilians.¹³⁹ This quickly caught international attention, especially in Denmark. Member of parliament (MP) Bertel Haarder (Left/Venstre, V) asked Nyrup Rasmussen to limit or avoid entirely Danish representation in Russian victory ceremonies commemorating the 50th anniversary of the end of World War II, to protest the barbaric acts happening in Chechnya. "The democracies of the West have already been scandalously passive in this tragic case," he argued. "The passiveness has strengthened the aggressive and undemocratic forces in Russia, while the liberal democrats have been left behind like in the '30s, when the West's democracies displayed passiveness and thus made it easier for the dictators to crush democratic forces."¹⁴⁰

The longer the conflict stretched on, the more political concerns it gave rise to in Denmark, which is rather removed geographically from the North Caucasus. Keld Albrechtsen

¹³⁷ Nyrup Rasmussen 1993.

¹³⁸ Nyrup Rasmussen 1994.

¹³⁹ Human Rights Watch 1996.

¹⁴⁰ Haarder 1995.

was worried that the Baltic countries' poor treatment of their ethnic Russian minorities would give Russia an excuse to attack them.¹⁴¹ Holger K. Nielsen, a social democrat who would become minister of foreign affairs some twenty years later, called the Western response “embarrassing” and said it was “terrible that President Yeltsin, whom the West supported, fully backs up the murders”.¹⁴²

Neither the First Chechen War nor the Russian leadership's behavior during it were promising in fulfilling the political right in Denmark's expectation that the new Russia would distance itself from the brutality of the Soviet Union. The fears expressed by Albrechtsen and Haarder, who fall on opposing ends of the political spectrum, share a common image of Yeltsin's Russia in the 1990s potentially playing the role of Hitler's Germany in the 1930s, and Chechnya potentially serving as the catalyst for war returning to Europe and spilling into other countries closer to Denmark. These comparisons were made by Nyrup Rasmussen as well, in such a way that further reflected his apparent rhetoric-only approach. In reminding Danes of their country's history choice to rescue nearly all Danish Jews from the Nazi during World War II, he said, “We did it – because we had to do it.”¹⁴³ Later that year, he went as far as to call Chechnya a genocide; however, despite his earlier recall of Danish heroism in the face of genocide, this did not inspire any greater action from his government.¹⁴⁴

There is no evidence that these fears somehow informed Poul Nyrup Rasmussen's stated aim of spearheading EU (or, for that matter, NATO) expansion to the east, which he had announced prior to the outbreak of war in Chechnya anyway. But by the end of the First Chechen

¹⁴¹ Albrechtsen 1996.

¹⁴² Nielsen 1996.

¹⁴³ Nyrup Rasmussen 2000a.

¹⁴⁴ Nyrup Rasmussen 2000b.

War, the Danish government's objective of spreading EU and NATO membership to the Baltic countries specifically was well-established. This objective was also now, to a degree, inseparable from anxiety over a Russian invasion of the Baltic countries, although this anxiety stemmed mostly from conjecture at this point. Nyrup Rasmussen believed that eastward expansion of the EU linked peace and economy.¹⁴⁵ Increasing the political ties of Denmark's networks to the Baltic countries ostensibly would make Denmark more secure overall as an individual nation, in line with the Danish concept of indirect security.

When the world entered the new millennium in 2000, Vladimir Putin had already come to power in Russia, and Russian troops had been sent into Chechnya for a second time; the Second Chechen War had begun. The battle phase of the war was relatively brief and lasted from August 1999 to April 2000, when a military resolution was reached and federal government in Chechnya was restored. However, a longer insurgency phase between Chechen militants and Russian forces continued for much of the following decade. The mostly good relations between Russia and Denmark up until this point were likely due in part to their limited direct contact – most of their interactions took place in the common forum of Baltic state issues and development. It was during the Second Chechen War that Denmark's interests in expanding the EU would converge with the conflict in Chechnya, and thereby bring Danish interests into contact with Russian ones.

Poul Nyrup Rasmussen visited St. Petersburg, Russia, in September 2001 – his second to last month as prime minister – to speak at the summit of the Baltic Development Forum. Much of his speech focused upon the upcoming Danish presidency of the EU, and its primary objective of finalizing EU expansion to Cyprus, Czechia, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta,

¹⁴⁵ Nyrup Rasmussen 1997.

Poland, Slovakia, and Slovenia. “I want to underline that the enlargement will create opportunities for Russia and St. Petersburg,” he said. “Let us open that window to Europe.”¹⁴⁶ His words echoed a theme that would run throughout his successor Anders Fogh Rasmussen’s tenure as prime minister of Denmark: Europe is institutional, not geographical. Fogh Rasmussen (V) became prime minister in November 2001. Almost immediately, he reaffirmed his intentions to promote NATO and EU enlargement, while also expressing an intent to help Russia “to find its rightful place in European security politics”.¹⁴⁷ His first year in office, however, brought him into conflict with Russia relatively quickly.

Denmark assumed the EU presidency on July 1, 2002, and had the ambitious goal of concluding negotiations with the ten candidate countries in Copenhagen in December. Kaliningrad was the first issue. Originally called Königsberg, the port city on the Baltic was annexed away from Nazi Germany by the Soviet Union in 1945 and renamed Kaliningrad. The small region borders the Baltic Sea, Poland, and Lithuania – this meant that when the Soviet Union dissolved, Kaliningrad Oblast (an oblast is a federal administrative unit of the Russian Federation) became an exclave: a piece of Russia alone outside of the Federation. The impending accession of Poland and Lithuania to the EU would cause issues for Kaliningrad, the largest of which was the question of how Russian citizens would now travel between Russia proper and Kaliningrad.

At the end of June, Jyllands-Posten, one of the largest newspapers in Denmark with a penchant for international controversy, published an article by a member of its leadership, which referred to Kaliningrad as “our time’s desperate, poor robbers’ nest” and suggested that the

¹⁴⁶ Nyrup Rasmussen 2001.

¹⁴⁷ Fogh Rasmussen 2001.

region return to the EU as Königsberg.¹⁴⁸ The Russian government, angered over the suggestion that Kaliningrad could undergo a change of borders, demanded an official reaction from the Danish government.¹⁴⁹ Danish politicians were upset by this demand, which they viewed as a lack of respect by Russia for Danish freedom of expression and press. *Jyllands-Posten*'s chief editor Jørgen Ejbøl, meanwhile, requested that the Russians write a letter to the editor if they wanted a fight.¹⁵⁰ Fogh Rasmussen made plans to resolve the issue of transit to Kaliningrad at the planned EU-Russia summit in November of that year, which was supposed to be held in Copenhagen. An unexpected diplomatic crisis in October, however, forced the summit to be moved to Brussels.

When Chechnya declared independence from Russia in 1997, it did so under the leadership of a man named Aslan Maskhadov. Maskhadov was a veteran of the first war in Chechnya and continued to push for a political solution to the second, up until his death during a raid by the FSB in spring 2005. His close political ally, Akhmed Zakayev, was also a veteran of the conflicts, but left Chechnya soon into the Second Chechen War to seek medical attention. Rather than return to Chechnya, he stayed abroad, where he could act as an international spokesman for Maskhadov. At the end of October 2002, representatives of the Chechen separatist government organized a Chechen World Congress in Copenhagen, where they could meet and discuss the negotiation of a political solution to the war with Russia. The Congress opened on October 28; its opening, however, as well as its premise, were overshadowed by events in Moscow just a few days earlier.

¹⁴⁸ Skaarup 2002a.

¹⁴⁹ Nielsen 2002.

¹⁵⁰ Moustgaard 2002.

On October 23, fifty or so Chechen terrorists stormed the Dubrovka Theater during a performance of the musical *Nord-Ost* and took hostage the sold-out audience of 850 people. The terrorists demanded an immediate end to the war in Chechnya – if Russian troops were not withdrawn within a week, they said, they would begin killing the hostages.¹⁵¹ Several hostages were killed over the next two days as the results of miscommunication or attempted escapes. On the morning of October 26, Russian special forces – the Spetsnaz – pumped a mysterious chemical gas into the theater, intended to sedate everyone inside before they launched an assault on the hostage takers. All of the terrorists were killed in the raid; however, the gas used by the Spetsnaz also killed over one hundred of the hostages.¹⁵²

Officially, the Chechen warlord Shamil Basayev claimed responsibility for the attack – Basayev was also the warlord whose actions in Dagestan and Chechnya in the summer of 1994 served as the trigger for the Dagestan and First Chechen Wars. Although Basayev publicly stated that Chechen president Maskhadov had no knowledge of the attack, the Russian government accused Maskhadov of involvement anyway.¹⁵³ Independently, multiple sources have alleged that the FSB staged the attack, including the renowned investigative journalist Anna Politkovskaya (assassinated on Putin’s birthday in October 2006) and former FSB agent Alexander Litvinenko (fatally poisoned a month after Politkovskaya).¹⁵⁴

Russia submitted a request through Interpol that Denmark arrest Zakayev, now in Copenhagen for the Chechen World Congress. Danish authorities did so, but refused to comply with the part of the request calling for Zakayev’s extradition. This refusal, combined with the

¹⁵¹ BBC 2002a.

¹⁵² BBC 2000b.

¹⁵³ BBC 2000c.

¹⁵⁴ Satter 2016.

Danish government's refusal to halt the Congress taking place in the wake of the theater crisis, caused the Danish-Russian relationship to plummet. The Danish foreign minister Per Stig Møller (Conservative People's Party/Konservative Folkeparti, KF) expressed his regret for this downturn in an otherwise essential relationship, but simultaneously found it highly important that, now more than ever, moderate forces such as those gathered at the Congress continue to work together in pursuit of a political solution to the war in Chechnya.¹⁵⁵

Common themes among responses by Danish politicians to Zakayev's arrest were displeasure that the Danish government had complied with Russia's request and appreciation that it had not prevented the Congress from taking place, as this would have violated freedom of speech in Denmark. There was uncertainty, however, over what to do with Zakayev. If Denmark refused to extradite him, its options were to free him and risk further anger from Russia (which the right-wing MP Peter Skaarup described as a "friendly" nation) or to prosecute him and use Danish resources on the case; if Denmark chose to extradite him, it risked international criticism for human rights violations.¹⁵⁶

There are also indications that certain sectors of Danish politics were concerned, not just about criticism for violating Zakayev's rights, but also for the actual wellbeing of Zakayev if he were sent back to Russia. Mogens Lykketoft (S) asked that the government wait to extradite him until it had first gone through the European Court of Human Rights – earlier that fall, Georgian president Eduard Shevardnadze had done the same thing in the face of Russian pressure to extradite the dozen or so Chechen terrorists recently detained in Georgia.¹⁵⁷ The question of what had happened to these fighters upon their arrival in Russia remained one of interest to the

¹⁵⁵ Stig Møller 2002.

¹⁵⁶ Skaarup 2002b.

¹⁵⁷ Lykketoft 2002.

political left in Denmark, more often the Russia-skeptical side of the spectrum there, even after the resolution of the Zakayev case.¹⁵⁸ The Danish government released Zakayev at the beginning of December, citing insufficient documentation in Russia's initial extradition request to justify actually extraditing him.

While this case played out during November 2002, Anders Fogh Rasmussen decided to move that month's EU-Russia summit from Copenhagen to Brussels, so as to offset Putin's threats of pulling out of the summit in response to the conflict with Denmark. The main issue on the table for this summit was that of transit between Russia and Kaliningrad once the countries surrounding Kaliningrad became EU members and thus adopted EU laws concerning cross-border movement. Fogh Rasmussen was prepared to push right back on Russian pressure, and said on the plane to the summit that it did not matter whether an agreement came out of the summit or not; his foreign minister Per Stig Møller was, in contrast, concerned that Denmark would be painted as anti-Russian if the negotiations failed.¹⁵⁹

The negotiations, however, succeeded. The EU and Russia agreed to grant special travel documents to Russian citizens going to and from Kaliningrad. In the post-agreement press conference, a member of the Danish delegation was allowed to choose which questions could be asked to the heads of state; when a French reporter asked Putin about Chechnya, Putin lashed out and threatened the reporter with what he called a "final circumcision".¹⁶⁰ This odd exchange did give Putin and Fogh Rasmussen something else about which they could agree – after the press

¹⁵⁸ Søndergaard 2002.

¹⁵⁹ *Fogh bag facaden* 2003, 17:24-17:58.

¹⁶⁰ Collignon 2002.

conference, Fogh Rasmussen remarked, “You were quite right, that your own journalists are as critical as ours.” “They are bandits, all of them,” Putin replied, and the two men laughed.¹⁶¹

Success at the Kaliningrad summit did not change the fact that the Chechen World Congress had set Danish-Russian relations on a powerful downward spiral. Compounding the immediate fallout of the clash, Fogh Rasmussen made eastward expansion of the EU and NATO the framework for Denmark’s Europe policy in the years to come.¹⁶² This would implicitly bring him, his country, and both organizations into conflict with Russia. Explicitly, Fogh Rasmussen saw Denmark’s opportunity to play an influential role in eastward expansion as its opportunity to cast off a century of “small state policy and appeasement policy with regards to first Germany and later the Soviet Union”.¹⁶³

In the winter of 2004, a number of Danish journalists were denied visas to Russia as retaliation for their critical coverage of the war in Chechnya, including the renowned Russia scholar Vibeke Sperling. At around the same time, the Russian government closed down the Danish Refugee Council’s office in Russia, significantly limiting how much humanitarian aid work Denmark could do in Chechnya, although it continued to financially support other aid organizations working in the Caucasus. MP Margrete Auken (SF) was not satisfied, saying, “It could easily be that Russia is saying, ‘Little Denmark over here, which happens to have a prime minister who called the Chechens a bunch of criminals – we could really screw them’.”¹⁶⁴ She continued on to criticize her government for not doing much more other than speaking out

¹⁶¹ *Fogh bag facaden* 2003, 23:43-23:52.

¹⁶² Fogh Rasmussen 2003.

¹⁶³ Ibid.

¹⁶⁴ Auken 2004.

sharply against Russia, echoing sentiments expressed by other MPs on the same topic a decade earlier.

Beginning in 2003, Fogh Rasmussen's rhetoric grew markedly more anti-Russia and anti-Soviet Union. Previously, when he mentioned Russia in speeches, it was almost always in a context of cooperation. But after the Chechen World Congress and the beginning of the downturn in Danish-Russian relations, he began to continually reference the Soviet Union and the shadow of communism over Eastern Europe during the twentieth century, and Denmark's suppression from 1864-1945. Fogh Rasmussen's rhetoric is a prime example of the conflict narrative in Rosanna Farbøl's theoretical framework for the politicization of Denmark's Cold War history; the conflict narrative demonizes the communist tyranny in the East, and lionizes the free democracies in the West, the defenders of freedom in the US, and the NATO loyalists in Denmark.¹⁶⁵ Farbøl argues that it draws primarily from the so-called small state mentality Denmark developed across its century of defeat, and derives meaning from the Western "victory" over the Soviet Union.

Nor did Fogh Rasmussen limit himself to deploying solely Danish historical experiences; in 2006, he hosted a 50th anniversary memorial concert in Copenhagen commemorating the Hungarian Revolution and took the speaking opportunity to further invoke the specter of Soviet/Russian villainy. In contrast, Poul Nyrup Rasmussen's left-leaning government of most of the 1990s held that the past cannot be used as a compass.¹⁶⁶ Danish researchers Mellander and Mouritzen conducted an analysis of Danish assertiveness under Fogh Rasmussen and concluded, "Until 2008 (including the April Bucharest summit [at which Georgia and Ukraine were

¹⁶⁵ Farbøl 2018.

¹⁶⁶ Farbøl 2018, p. 77.

effectively promised NATO membership]), there is not *one* single instance of Danish restraint. There is not the slightest effort to avoid insulting Russia... The intransigent and value-based Danish stance in connection with the Chechen Congress obviously represents an assertion leap”.¹⁶⁷

Leading up to that April 2008 NATO summit in Bucharest, Fogh Rasmussen argued fervently at home and abroad for the continued relevance of NATO, which he viewed as a political organization just as much as a military one.¹⁶⁸ He supported the linkage of the EU and NATO missions. He also continued to push the idea that Europe is institutional, not geographical. When Romania and Bulgaria joined the EU in 2007, he said of the occasion, “As members of the European Union, Romania and Bulgaria are now regaining their rightful place in the European family of nations.”¹⁶⁹ Fogh Rasmussen supported EU membership for Turkey, due to its long-running institutional ties to the EU and the various iterations that came before it, but he did not support EU membership for Russia. He used the same reason to justify NATO and EU membership for Ukraine and Georgia, which is by no means a unanimous opinion across either organization. Implicitly or explicitly taking this view of what is Europe allowed him to continue to keep Russia on the outside and as an “other”.

This also adds a political dimension specifically to extending NATO membership to Ukraine and Georgia, which Fogh Rasmussen supported at the Bucharest NATO summit in April 2008.¹⁷⁰ Due to British, French, and German opposition, Georgia and Ukraine were not granted Membership Action Plans at the summit, but they received a commitment from NATO that they

¹⁶⁷ Mellander and Mouritzen 2016, p. 454.

¹⁶⁸ Fogh Rasmussen 2005.

¹⁶⁹ Fogh Rasmussen 2007.

¹⁷⁰ Fogh Rasmussen 2008a.

would become memberships eventually – it was a matter of when. Russia was angered. “Russia will take steps aimed at ensuring its interest along its borders,” a Russian general told the press after the summit. “These will not only be military steps, but also steps of a different nature.”¹⁷¹ Four months later, Russia invaded Georgia, recognized the independence of the Georgian regions Abkhazia and South Ossetia, and established an illegal occupation in both regions which is still ongoing.

The Russo-Georgian War was an obvious turning point for Europe and for NATO – war had returned to Europe. Fogh Rasmussen was deeply concerned by the events in Georgia and supportive of the country’s sovereignty; his already-strong rhetoric against Russia underwent a clear increase following the war. As early as 2005, he had begun linking energy security to political issues and instability in energy supplier countries, ostensibly a response to the shutting-off by Russia of gas to Ukraine in the winter of 2005. However, in most references between 2005 and 2008, he refrained from calling out specific suppliers. After the war in August 2008, however, Fogh Rasmussen drew ever-clearer delineations between Russia as an undemocratic actor, Russia as a major gas and oil supplier, and the political risk involved in the West with continuing to grow energy dependency upon Russian resources.

In October 2008, he expressed the need for a green revolution in the West, to put distance between Western energy consumption and greater need for various suppliers. “We must advance our freedom with a green revolution that reduces the power of totalitarian regimes,” he told the Danish parliament.¹⁷² Denmark did in earnest undertake the task of a green revolution – this will be covered further in the later chapter on energy. However, Anders Fogh Rasmussen left the post

¹⁷¹ Baluyevsky qtd. in Shchedrov and Lowe 2008.

¹⁷² Fogh Rasmussen 2008b.

of prime minister in April 2009 to become the Secretary General of NATO. While he had grounded the green revolution in political issues, his successor Lars Løkke Rasmussen (V) entered office with a different outlook on Danish-Russian relations, as well on the direction of the Danish economy; he instead grounded the green revolution in economic issues. This priority change in 2009 meant that Russia as a political threat was downgraded for the next five years, until Russian aggression in Ukraine in 2014 forced Europe and NATO to reorganize their security and political priorities.

Løkke Rasmussen's primary objective regarding Russia when he came into office was to salvage the rotten relationship he had inherited from the outwardly assertive Fogh Rasmussen. He was an arguably much more inwardly focused prime minister than Fogh Rasmussen, at least during his first stint as prime minister (2009-11). He and his foreign minister Lene Espersen came under fire from the Social Democrats for what they alleged to be a de-prioritization of an informal summit between the foreign ministers of the Arctic states. Though attendance at the summit included US Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton and Russian foreign minister Sergei Lavrov, Espersen did not attend because she was on vacation with her family at the time; the justice minister attended in her stead.¹⁷³

Løkke Rasmussen's friendlier approach to Russia had a rapid payoff – in April 2010, Russian president Dmitry Medvedev visited Denmark. It was the first time a Russian head of state had visited Denmark in fifty years. The focus of the visit was a modernization partnership between the two countries, signed during the visit. Putin, serving as prime minister at the time, made his own state visit to Denmark a year later, in April 2011. He and Løkke Rasmussen were

¹⁷³ Kofod 2010; Mortensen 2010.

friendly as they stressed the economic closeness of their countries and their political ties over security in Afghanistan and development in the Baltic and Arctic regions, before ending the night with beers in Copenhagen's Tivoli Gardens.¹⁷⁴ Putin also visited Danish shipping giant A.P. Møller-Mærsk (known internationally as simply Maersk) during his brief visit. These bilateral visits, paired with the Nord Stream pipeline project (detailed in the next chapter), represented both a marked improvement in the bilateral relationship as well as Løkke Rasmussen's focus on economic issues rather than political, security, or geopolitical.

In October 2011, Løkke Rasmussen was replaced as prime minister by Helle Thorning-Schmidt (S). Thorning-Schmidt arguably downgraded Russia as a political priority even more, although she was forced to deal with a Soviet-era scandal during her political campaign and cabinet formation process following her election. Ole Sohn (SF), who she named her minister of economic and business affairs, was a former member of the Danish Communist Party (DKP) and was the party's chairman during the late 1980s. Allegations, which were then confirmed in 2012 in a series of investigative articles published in *Jyllands-Posten*, emerged that he had personally received millions of Danish crowns (DKK) in cash from the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) between 1987 and 1990. It was no secret that the CPSU funded communist parties, including the DKP, around the world. Sohn, however, claimed that he had never accepted cash from Moscow and never knew that others in DKP were doing so.¹⁷⁵

Valentin Falin, who had served as the last Soviet chief of all economic support to foreign communist parties, countered, "This doesn't necessarily mean that Sohn personally got the money...but he was the addressee, so it isn't a question of whether it happened with or without

¹⁷⁴ Løkke Rasmussen and Putin 2011.

¹⁷⁵ Pihl and Rose 2011.

his knowledge. Of course the chairman knew it.”¹⁷⁶ Sohn continued to deny any knowledge of the DKP receiving money at all from Moscow, and this was where the scandal took root during the 2011 parliamentary elections. Thorning-Schmidt had to defend her decision to name him minister of economic and business affairs in light of his dishonesty, but she continued to express her confidence in him and refused to consider opening investigations against him.¹⁷⁷

The good relationship between Denmark and Russia, due to Lars Løkke Rasmussen’s efforts from 2009-11, combined with Helle Thorning-Schmidt’s own political focuses to ensure that there were few episodes of real significance to the bilateral political relationship before Ukraine in 2014. Not even an espionage scandal in April 2012 was able to derail the relationship; a Finnish professor teaching at the University of Copenhagen, Timo Kivimäki, was charged (his initial arrest came in September 2010) with delivering security policy assessments and information that could be of interest to the FSB during multiple meetings with contacts at the Russian embassy. The embassy employees suspected of espionage left Denmark before news of the case broke, per an agreement between Denmark and Russia. “We have no interest in this case burdening the otherwise good bilateral relationship,” foreign minister Villy Søvndal announced.¹⁷⁸

The Russian annexation of Crimea and fomentation of civil war in eastern Ukraine changed, as they did so many other things, political relations between Denmark and Russia. Helle Thorning-Schmidt, for one, significantly altered her rhetoric towards Russia. While she had overall made few references to Russia in her speeches up until that point, afterwards she began using an adaptation of Anders Fogh Rasmussen’s conflict narrative that played up

¹⁷⁶ Falin qtd. in Pihl and Rose 2011.

¹⁷⁷ Thorning-Schmidt 2011a; Thorning-Schmidt 2011b.

¹⁷⁸ Søvndal qtd. in DR 2012.

Denmark overcoming its legacy of defeat. Denmark supported the sanctions that the EU put in place against Russia, despite the potential negative effect that the sanctions (and Russia's counter-sanctions) could have on the Danish agriculture and food sectors. It also used its EU Neighborhood Policy programs (which would be augmented under Lars Løkke Rasmussen's second stretch as prime minister) to further strengthen democratic reform and civil society in Ukraine.¹⁷⁹ Denmark continued to support a political solution to the crisis in Ukraine, a line which was upheld when Lars Løkke Rasmussen returned to the post of prime minister in June 2015.

Lars Løkke Rasmussen changed course from his earlier policy of friendly behavior towards Russia and became to speak more harshly on Russian conduct. This was slightly undercut by his foreign minister Kristian Jensen (V), who said in an interview with *Weekendavisen* in September 2015 that "Crimea has returned to Russia", followed by, "Nowhere I've been in Europe is talking about how Crimea should be allowed to determine its own fate."¹⁸⁰ Jensen clarified in a later interview that that had been his observation – the focus of the rest of Europe was on eastern Ukraine, not Crimea.¹⁸¹ While Jensen apparently did not really mean what he had said, there were certain other voices in Danish politics who did agree with his words, and believed them.

Marie Krarup is a member of the right-wing nationalist populist party Danish People's Party (Dansk Folkeparti/DF). In the 1980s, she trained as a Russian language officer with the Danish Army. In the 1990s, she began working in the Defense Ministry and was stationed at the Danish embassy in Moscow from 1998-2001 as a defense attaché. In 2011, she became a

¹⁷⁹ Lidegaard 2014.

¹⁸⁰ Jensen qtd. in Lidegaard 2015.

¹⁸¹ Jensen qtd. in Damkjær 2015.

member of parliament, and she went on to become the defense spokesperson for DF. Krarup's opinions are so infamously pro-Russia that they played a role in breaking her longtime friendship with Danish journalist Anna Libak, who is openly critical of Russia and with whom she served at the embassy two decades earlier. In a 2018 documentary miniseries called *Girlfriends in Putinland* (*Veninder i Putinland*), the two traveled to Russia together and attempted to reconcile their friendship. "If the defense spokesperson in the country's second largest party is working for us to not dissociate ourselves from a great power that takes parts of a neighboring state with military force, that makes them a security threat," Libak says about Krarup in the documentary.¹⁸² "I'm mad at her because I think she's speaking against her better knowledge about what Russia is. She can speak Russian, she knows well what's happening. She lets her ideology blind her."¹⁸³

Krarup was fired from her post as defense spokesperson for DF later in 2018 – the reasoning behind this decision, according to her successor Jeppe Jakobsen, appeared to be her opinions and statements about Russia.¹⁸⁴ But throughout the 2010s, she has remained a constant voice advocating for the Russian side of international issues in Denmark, despite never really finding sympathy for these views elsewhere in Danish politics. In 2015, the EU established the East Stratcom taskforce, designed to combat Russian misinformation in Eastern Europe (including in Russia itself). Krarup appeared to feel personally attacked by her government's support of the taskforce – she accused foreign minister Anders Samuelsen (Liberal Alliance, LA) of criminalizing "certain opinions, especially EU-critical and Islam-critical opinions", opinions which she openly espouses.¹⁸⁵ Samuelsen, in return, expressed concern that she had "publicly

¹⁸² *Veninder i Putinland* 2018, episode 2, 4:10-4:27.

¹⁸³ *Veninder i Putinland* 2018, episode 2, 23:18-23:28.

¹⁸⁴ Jakobsen qtd. in Løvkvist 2018.

¹⁸⁵ Krarup 2016.

questioned FE's [the Danish Defense Intelligence Service] threat assessment of Russia".¹⁸⁶

Krarp also objected strongly to the criminalization of knowingly abetting foreign influence campaigns in Denmark, which was passed in 2019.

Over the next few years, Krarp became more and more outspoken; this meant that she in turn came under more and more criticism, including terms such as "useful idiot", "fifth column", "Putin's friend", and "traitor".¹⁸⁷ In the fall of 2016, she was widely criticized for saying that the EU poses a greater threat to Denmark than Russia. In response, she wrote an entire book defending her viewpoint, titled *New Cold War (Ny Kold Krig)*, intended to portray the other side of the debate. In the introduction alone, she claims that uncontrolled immigration and Islamization are the real danger to Europe's freedom.¹⁸⁸ She also pins the Russo-Georgian War of 2008 fully on Georgia for attacking South Ossetia, which she calls "Russia's ally" – implying that South Ossetia is indeed an independent and recognized state, capable of forming alliances.¹⁸⁹ Though Krarp's party ultimately did not back her perspectives, her consistency and outspokenness cannot be denied; she remains a key voice in those spheres of Danish politics that concern Russia.

Though almost always alone in Denmark in her views, Marie Krarp does represent a certain Danish political perspective about Russia; she stands across from voices such as Keld Albrechtsen in the 1990s or Anders Fogh Rasmussen in the 2000s. Fogh Rasmussen, for his part, stopped serving as Secretary General for NATO in 2014 and has continued to fight against Russia as a private citizen. In 2016, while working as an external advisor to Ukrainian president

¹⁸⁶ Samuelsen 2016.

¹⁸⁷ Baeré 2018.

¹⁸⁸ Krarp 2018, p. 2.

¹⁸⁹ Krarp 2018, p. 6.

Petro Poroshenko, he put together the Friends of Ukraine initiative, which his website describes as “a group of leading politicians and former senior diplomats...[which] seeks to make the case for why a reformed and European Ukraine matters”.¹⁹⁰ In September 2019, he attended the 5th Annual Tbilisi International Conference in Georgia, where he argued a case for how Georgia could still join NATO in such a way that “would show Russia that creating frozen conflicts can’t forever freeze Georgia’s future”.¹⁹¹

In 2018, the Danish Defense Intelligence Service reported that there was a threat of Russian interference in coming Danish elections. The Russian embassy in Denmark tweeted out a sarcastic response to the report, saying, “Since there is no difference in russophobic approach between #DK Government and opposition, meddling into DK elections makes no sense”.¹⁹² Politically, Denmark remains largely unfriendly towards Russia, a reality of which Russia is cognizant. Mette Frederiksen, prime minister for less than a year as of May 2020, appears to uphold the same line on Russia that has reigned in Danish politics since the beginning of the Ukraine crisis. She is likely to carry on this firm outlook towards Russia, due to the continuing dynamics in the bilateral relationship such as unsatisfactory (from the Western perspective) institutional reforms in Russia, continuing Russian aggression in its neighborhood, and now new changes in the Danish-Russian energy-economic relationship.

Economic Relations

The two most important things to understand for the economic relationship between Denmark and Russia are the Danish policy of tying security to development aid, and the

¹⁹⁰ Fogh Rasmussen 2020.

¹⁹¹ Fogh Rasmussen 2019.

¹⁹² Embassy of Russia, DK 2018.

European energy sector. When the Soviet Union and communism in Eastern Europe were crumbling, Poul Schlüter and the rest of the world were reading the writing on the wall. Going into the 1990s, the Danish government was seeking to expand investment opportunities in Eastern Europe. It hoped to link this economic initiative, which would be to the benefit of the Danish business community, with support for reforms towards political pluralism and human rights in the new democracies emerging in the east.¹⁹³ The Øststøtte (“East support”) program was intended to build on this, and in 1991 an aid commission was established which listed Eastern Europe and the USSR as a priority. The concept of indirect security was not codified into Danish defense policy until the end of the decade, and later governments would make more explicit connections between Danish security and economic development policy. The early efforts of Schlüter’s government to bolster political reforms in Eastern Europe, particularly in the Baltic countries, can however be interpreted as an early iteration of this concept.

Denmark’s interactions with Russia throughout the 1990s largely took place through the Baltic countries. Though Denmark was outwardly optimistic about the evolution of the new Russian state (with a dip following the outbreak of war in Chechnya), its concerted efforts to economically build up the Baltic countries specifically indicate a targeted policy of building a buffer zone in the Baltic Sea region, should one again become necessary. Kaliningrad and the northwestern region of Russia, with St. Petersburg at the epicenter, were also included in these concerted efforts. As an example, the Danish government amended the existing export credit law to help Danish companies invest and build infrastructure in the Baltic Sea region, especially in the energy sector, where Denmark possesses strong technical expertise.¹⁹⁴ This sort of support

¹⁹³ Udenrigsministeriet 1989.

¹⁹⁴ Lundholt 1992; Erhvervsministeriet 1992.

for economic development in the Baltic states and in Russia comprised the most meaningful economic interactions between Denmark and Russia throughout the 1990s. Trade numbers were overall insignificant between them. Denmark's top export to Russia during this time was agricultural products, and its top import from Russia was fuel-related products.

Danish policy in the Baltic Sea region during the 1990s focused on the nexus of economics, politics, and security policies; beyond aid contributions earmarked for the economic development of the Baltic Sea region, economics appeared to take a backseat among Danish members of parliament, in favor of more pressing political and security concerns. In the late '90s, plans for eastward expansion of the EU and NATO gained traction in the international community and were spearheaded in part by Denmark. Economic concerns began to assume a greater role again, as Poul Nyrup Rasmussen's government painted EU expansion as the linkage of peace and economy. Theoretically, deeper and more numerous trade ties are supposed to decrease the propensity of conflict between countries that share the same network, if they do not already trade directly with one another.¹⁹⁵ The Baltic countries have long relied on Russia as their largest trading partner, and as the centralization and internal markets of the Soviet Union disappeared, this partnership continued to be of high importance. If Denmark increased its trade ties with the Baltic countries, and in turn increased the dependence of those countries upon Danish investments, so too would Russia be brought into this deepened trade network.

Nyrup Rasmussen explained it as wanting to be a country that others could count on. "To do something for others is to be something. Especially when one does a little more than one needs to do," he said in his New Year's Eve address in 1998.¹⁹⁶ This provides an idealistic and

¹⁹⁵ Kinne 2012.

¹⁹⁶ Nyrup Rasmussen 1998.

value-driven rhetorical frame for economic aid as a tool of security policy, which would continue to be a key pillar of economic relations between Denmark and Russia over the coming decades. Russia's heavy involvement and influence within its neighboring countries make it difficult to speak of one and not mention the other, particularly in the wake of Russia's ongoing military engagements in Georgia and Ukraine. Russia interprets NATO and EU expansion towards its borders as military and political-economic encirclement, respectively, by the West. Denmark's support and participation in both is compounded by its significant financial aid invested in Russia's immediate neighborhood – in the 1990s, that aid mostly went to Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania.

The state of the Danish-Russian economic and commercial relationship in the years following the Soviet Union's breakup laid foundational conditions for components of their overall relationship in the decades to come. Direct bilateral trade between Denmark and Russia was low, meaning that Denmark did not stand to lose catastrophically if its relations with Russia were to be disrupted. There was also little room for asymmetry in their limited trading relationship, eliminating a possible source of pressure or power dynamics that small countries can often experience with larger trade partners. Relatedly, Denmark also did not depend on imports of Russian gas or oil and had actually achieved energy self-sufficiency for the first time in 1997.¹⁹⁷ Russia's economy depends upon its large wealth of natural resources, which Putin quickly took steps to seize control of early on in his reign. Its position as a major supplier of oil and gas to Europe (and, to increasing degrees in the 2010s, China) gives it a certain amount of influence over various importers of these resources, although more so gas than oil.

¹⁹⁷ Energistyrelsen 1999, p. 33.

Denmark lacked this significant economic tie to Russia, so actions that put it in opposition with Russia were of a lower cost than they would be for a country that depended more greatly upon Russian resources. Support for Denmark among some of the Western-oriented countries bordering Russia was also high, thanks to Danish investments there throughout the 1990s. Environmental protection efforts in the Baltic Sea region were an important area of economic cooperation throughout the 1990s and were a priority of Danish Øststøtte money going towards Russia, along with Poland and the Baltic countries, up through 2002. Entering the new decade and millennium, therefore, the conditions were there for Denmark to afford to take up a hard posture against Russia, which it did beginning in that year.

This was when the controversy surrounding the Russia-ordered arrest of Chechen separatist leader Akhmed Zakayev in Copenhagen took place, unfortunately at the same time as the deadly Dubrovka theater crisis in Moscow. The political falling-out between Russian president Vladimir Putin and Danish prime minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen that occurred as a response led to tense relations between the two countries for most of the 2000s. Figures released by the Danish government in 2012 revealed that, from 2000 to 2011, Danish exports to Russia increased 9.8% annually.¹⁹⁸ In spite of this increase, Germany, Sweden, Finland, Austria, Belgium, and Holland were all able to increase their exports to Russia in the same time period by so much that Denmark's share of exports across that aggregated group fell from 4.2% in 2000 to 2.6% in 2011.¹⁹⁹ Increased Russian trade with all of the other countries in this reference group is a possible indicator of a Russian unwillingness to engage the Danes as much in the wake of the Zakayev scandal and the resulting distance in the relationship between the two countries.

¹⁹⁸ Regeringen 2012.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

Shipping has long been a major industry for both countries. Denmark's position at the mouth of the Baltic Sea, where the Skagerrak and Kattegat straits connect the Baltic to the North Sea, gives it strategic value both militarily and commercially. The Baltic Sea is of high importance to the Russian shipping industry – if it were to lose shipping access in the Baltic, for example due to a NATO blockade, it could redirect shipping through its Arctic and Pacific ports, but this would be quite costly to do.²⁰⁰ These geographical realities for each country mean that, even if overall relations are going through a low, there is still guaranteed interaction in this sector at the very least. Russia increased its shipping traffic through the Baltic in the early 2000s, because it opened a new oil terminal at the Primorsk port in 2001. By 2015, Primorsk was shipping a third of Russia's total oil exports, which comes out to approximately 70 million tons of oil daily.²⁰¹

However, in the early 2000s there were issues with Russian ships passing through Danish waters, particularly around the Storebælt bridge connecting the Danish islands of Sjælland and Fyn, without pilots.²⁰² This was a serious concern for the Danish government – the sailing route there is inherently difficult, and an increase in oil tankers, as well as an increase in ships not utilizing pilots, meant there was an increased risk for ship collisions that would endanger human lives and environmental conditions, particularly if there were a resulting oil spill. There was frustration on the Danish side that, despite Russia's expansion of its oil shipping capacity, there was no response by Russian authorities to Danish pressure about increasing security by forcing Russian ships to use pilots.²⁰³ Anders Fogh Rasmussen mentioned the persistent issue as well

²⁰⁰ Vedby Rasmussen 2018.

²⁰¹ PTP 2015.

²⁰² Dohrmann 2002a; Dohrmann 2002b; Albrechtsen 2003a; Albrechtsen 2003b; Albrechtsen 2003c.

²⁰³ Albrechtsen 2003a.

during his address at the 6th Baltic Development Forum Summit, which was held in September 2004 in Hamburg, Germany.²⁰⁴

Overall, however, it was clear that Fogh Rasmussen, a known hardliner on Russia, did not really consider bilateral economic cooperation with Russia to be a priority, unlike his eventual successors as prime minister. Especially during the mid-2000s, he referred to expanding economic cooperation with the US, the EU, and China, but not to Russia. This common omission, in contrast to rhetoric by later prime ministers and in tandem with the earlier-cited figures showing Denmark being outpaced by its peers in the EU with regards to exports to Russia, was apparently deliberate. At around the same time, in the winter of 2006, Russia shut off gas supplies to Ukraine in the middle of a dispute over gas prices. This was not an isolated incident – a 2007 report by the Swedish Defence Research Agency found 55 occasions upon which Russia had shut off or threatened to shut off energy deliveries to other countries between 1992 and 2006, almost all of which were for political reasons.²⁰⁵

Gas and oil imports from Russia by Denmark have historically been negligible. Denmark owns its own oil and gas fields in the North Sea, and primarily imports additional energy from Norway. More importantly, Denmark's massive progress in the renewable energy technology sector since the scare of the 1970s oil crisis made it one of the European countries with the highest energy security in electricity by 2018 and the first to source half of its electricity consumption from wind by 2020.²⁰⁶ But a decade before these figures became a reality, the shift to primarily sustainable energy systems was still underway. The Social Democrats first broached the subject of Russia as an unstable energy supplier on 27 January 2006, a little less than a month

²⁰⁴ Fogh Rasmussen 2004.

²⁰⁵ Larsson 2007.

²⁰⁶ Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2018; Gronholt-Pedersen 2020.

after Russia shut off (and then restored) the gas to Ukraine, and posed it as a motivator for increasing efforts towards sustainable energy in Denmark.²⁰⁷ Potential gas disruptions to the Baltic countries were also a concern in Denmark.

The Baltic countries became EU members in 2004, fulfilling a political and economic goal of the Danes, but in 2006 the EU forced Lithuania to shut down its Ignalina nuclear power plant, one of its most important energy sources. The Danish People's Party (Dansk Folkeparti, DF) argued that doing so, and thereby forcing Lithuania to become completely dependent upon Russian energy, would open the door to a "Russian offensive".²⁰⁸ Foreign minister Per Stig Møller responded that it would be the policy of the Danish government to aid in modernizing Lithuania's energy production, transmission, and distribution sectors.²⁰⁹ At the same time, Danish economic aid was also going towards democracy and human rights groups in Belarus, economic development programs in Russia's Kaliningrad and Pskov oblasts, and civil society capacity building in the North Caucasus, all through Denmark's Neighborhood Program.²¹⁰ Economic aid continued to be used as a tool of foreign policy in countries neighboring Russia, intended to create external pushback on what Holger K. Nielsen (Socialist People's Party/Socialistisk Folkeparti, SF) called a country "moving quickly in the direction of a dictatorship".²¹¹

As EU expansion also began to run up against its limits as a "stability generating instrument", Fogh Rasmussen placed a greater premium on making Danish neighborhood

²⁰⁷ Lund 2006.

²⁰⁸ Messerschmidt 2006.

²⁰⁹ Stig Møller 2006a.

²¹⁰ Stig Møller 2006b.

²¹¹ Nielsen 2006.

policies more attractive to the countries in which they would be operating.²¹² This economic objective ties in with his stated desire to target active, preventive Danish foreign and security policy towards dealing with problems “exactly where they arise”.²¹³ Starting in 2006, Fogh Rasmussen’s speeches began to focus much more on the issue of energy supply security for Denmark. He made frequent references to rejecting dependence upon politically unstable countries and regions for the purchase of gas and oil, though he did not initially name specific countries or regions. He did, in 2007, mention that the increasing concentration of fossil fuel production in Russia, and increasing European dependency upon that production, was a source of vulnerability for Europe.²¹⁴

At this time, Russia and Germany were well underway with a gas pipeline project in the Baltic Sea that they called Nord Stream. The idea for Nord Stream was first pitched in 1997, it was recognized by the EU as a “project of common interest” in 2000, and by 2005 the design process and negotiation of contracts had begun in earnest under the auspices of the Nord Stream AG company, in which the Russian state-owned gas giant Gazprom is the majority stakeholder.²¹⁵ The project was presented as one that would increase European energy security by providing up to 55 billion cubic meters of Russian gas yearly. The pipeline would run from Vyborg in northwestern Russia to Greifswald in northern Germany, passing along the way through the exclusive economic zones (EEZ) of Russia, Finland, Sweden, and Germany, as well as the territorial waters of Russia, Germany, and Denmark.²¹⁶

²¹² Fogh Rasmussen 2006a.

²¹³ Fogh Rasmussen 2006b.

²¹⁴ Fogh Rasmussen 2007a.

²¹⁵ Nord Stream 2013.

²¹⁶ A country’s exclusive economic zone extends out 200 nautical miles from its coastline and refers to that country’s sovereign right to exploration and usage of resources beneath the surface. By contrast, a country’s territorial waters extend out 12 nautical miles from the coastline and are fully under state sovereignty.

The Baltic countries and Poland were almost immediately opposed to the project, as their own experiences with Russia as their majority gas supplier had not been positive. Despite Fogh Rasmussen's repeated resistance to Russian engagement, and explicit statements beginning in March 2007 that increased energy imports from Russia made Europe more vulnerable, he was positive about Nord Stream. In February 2007, a month before he first mentioned Russia as increasing European vulnerability, he told Polish prime minister Jarosław Kaczyński that the pipeline would contribute to Europe's energy security. "Denmark will not interfere in Germany's and Russia's decision to lay a gas transmission line in the Baltic Sea between the two countries," he announced.²¹⁷

Fogh Rasmussen's rhetoric was supportive of the Baltic countries' concerns, and he had a history of standing up for them – as an example, in 2005 he was one of several Western leaders who demanded Putin issue an apology to the Baltic countries for their earlier annexation and occupation by the Soviet Union. However, his support of Gazprom's Nord Stream project and statements to Kaczyński flew in the face of his Baltic Sea region neighbors' fears about the pipeline, as well as his own stated opposition to purchasing more gas and oil from Russia. The incongruity between Fogh Rasmussen's words and actions is both compounded and perhaps explained by a business deal concluded in the summer of 2006.

Denmark has its own state energy company, formerly known as DONG (Dansk Olie og Naturgas/Danish Oil and Natural Gas) but renamed in 2017 to Ørsted. Before 2006, Denmark had never purchased gas from Russia. In the summer of that year, Ørsted signed a deal with Gazprom, under which Ørsted would purchase 1 billion cubic meters of gas annually for twenty

²¹⁷ Fogh Rasmussen qtd. in Knudsen 2007.

years, beginning in 2011.²¹⁸ Ørsted would also be delivering gas from a Norwegian gas field to Gazprom's UK subsidiary, per a separate deal signed at the same time.²¹⁹ The Executive Vice President of Ørsted who negotiated the deal, Kurt Bligaard Pedersen, became a managing director with Gazprom in 2014 and went on to become CEO of its UK division, a position he still holds as of May 2020.

It is likely that this enormous contract between the Danish state-owned energy enterprise and its Russian counterpart was a factor in Fogh Rasmussen's support of Nord Stream; this also appears to be the first major instance of an apparently emerging pattern in which geopolitical and security concerns in Denmark were subjugated to economic ones when it came to Russia. In May 2007, three months after his promising words to Kaczyński and just under a year after the conclusion of the Ørsted-Gazprom deals expanding cooperation at home and in the North Sea, Fogh Rasmussen told his parliament, "[The North Sea] has given supply security and a good economy. But one day, the adventure in the North Sea will end. And on that day, we must have other energy sources ready to ensure that Denmark can continue to supply itself with energy. We do not want to be dependent upon buying oil and natural gas from countries and regions that will abuse energy supplies as a tool of foreign and security policy."²²⁰

In August 2008, Russia invaded the small former Soviet republic of Georgia. Russia had spent much of the year engaging in increasingly provocative actions towards Georgia and in its separatist regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, culminating in the mobilization and assembly of Russian forces along the border between Russia and South Ossetia during the first week of August. When Georgian forces responded to aggression from South Ossetian positions, Russian

²¹⁸ Ørsted 2006.

²¹⁹ Ibid.

²²⁰ Fogh Rasmussen 2007b.

troops were ready to move in.²²¹ The war lasted five days. During that time, Russian forces bombed the country, including attempts at bombing the strategically essential Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline; caused massive refugee displacement; and came within 25 miles of taking the Georgian capital, Tbilisi. US diplomat Ronald Asmus argued that the Russian offensive had the objective of signaling to Georgian president Mikheil Saakashvili, who was one of the instrumental figures in Georgia's democratic Rose Revolution in 2003 and who built close ties to the US and to NATO, that Putin would not tolerate Georgia's attempts to go west.²²² It is additionally important to note that this narrative of events is drawn from Western and Georgian sources, and the Russian government's version of events is very different from the one described here.

At the Bucharest NATO summit in April 2008, NATO promised eventual membership to Georgia and Ukraine; supporters of this promise included Anders Fogh Rasmussen. One of the consequences of the war was an illegal military occupation in Abkhazia and South Ossetia by Russian troops, and Russian recognition of both regions as sovereign states. The existence of these territorial disputes is a blocking factor in Georgia's hopes of NATO accession, according to a 1995 NATO study on expansion.²²³ The context of this war is important, because it provides the context for further economic relations between Denmark and Russia that would downgrade political and security interests in favor of economic gain. Though energy security, in all its forms, has been a Danish priority for decades, and though Denmark has made great strides in the technical aspects of achieving energy security, the government, Danish companies, and sometimes both have a less stellar record on Russian energy deals affecting the energy security

²²¹ Asmus 2010; BBC 2008a; BBC 2008b; European Parliament 2008; *Financial Times* 2008; Chivers 2008.

²²² Asmus 2010.

²²³ NATO 1995.

of other countries. Nord Stream and its companion pipeline Nord Stream 2, which will be covered later, are highly publicized and much-discussed examples of this. A much more obscure example can be found further from home, in Georgia some two thousand miles away.

When Putin made a state visit to Denmark in April 2011, his first ever, he visited only three parties: Prime Minister Lars Løkke Rasmussen; Queen Margrethe II; and the headquarters of A.P. Møller-Mærsk, or Maersk, the world's largest shipping company. At Maersk, he discussed the need for investment in Russia's port infrastructure, as well as Gazprom's search for partners to explore the Arctic for gas and oil reserves; Rosneft, the Russian state's massive oil company, was considering Maersk for the same task.²²⁴ In 2009, Maersk CEO Nils Smedegaard Andersen had begun to investigate emerging market opportunities in Russia. Maersk launched a new transatlantic service between St. Petersburg and Ecuador in 2010. At the opening ceremony (attended by Putin, Løkke Rasmussen, and Smedegaard Andersen), the Danish prime minister declared, "I am glad and proud that a Danish company is opening a new door together with its Russian partners. This is an example of our bilateral relations, of our trade with you."²²⁵

The opening ceremony was held at the Petrolsport container terminal at St. Petersburg's Bolshoi Port. Petrolsport is owned by Global Ports Investments, which was founded by Transportation Investments Holding Limited (TIHL) in 2008 and is based out of Cyprus, a known destination for Russian money laundering; TIHL co-founder Konstantin Nikolaev is connected to Putin's close circle of associates.²²⁶ APM Terminals (APM), a subsidiary of Maersk, bought 37.5% of Global Ports in September 2012 and became co-controller, alongside

²²⁴ Kristiansen 2013; Gronholt-Pedersen 2013.

²²⁵ Løkke Rasmussen qtd. in Petrolsport 2010.

²²⁶ Stamouli and Hinshaw 2018; Rosca 2019; Kirchgaessner and Farolfi 2017; Young 2013; Harding 2018; CSIS n.d.; Kremlin n.d.

TIHL, of Russia's largest port operation company.²²⁷ The same month of Putin's 2011 visit, APM purchased the seaport in Poti, a city on Georgia's Black Sea coast, and announced its plans to transform the port into a new deep-water port. Without certain knowledge about Black Sea regional politics and Georgian domestic politics, this investment may seem unremarkable, or at least no more remarkable than any of the other 78 ports APM operates. However, APM's purchase of Poti further illustrates Maersk's self-interested ties to Moscow's political leadership.

In October 2012, Mikheil Saakashvili lost the parliamentary election to Bidzina Ivanishvili, a Georgian billionaire who has close ties to the Kremlin. That same month, Georgian businessman David Iakobashvili acquired assets previously held by Davit Kezerashvili, a former defense minister under Saakashvili.²²⁸ Through parent companies, Iakobashvili is the owner of at least two terminal operators at the APM-owned Poti port. The month after, Iakobashvili acquired 80% ownership of Petrocas Energy, a Cyprus-based oil transit company operating in the South Caucasus and Central Asia's Caspian region.²²⁹ He has a history of conducting business with Bidzina Ivanishvili in Russia, where both men made their fortunes. Further financial ties between Ivanishvili, the Poti seaport, and APM are alleged by members of the political opposition in Georgia and former Georgian ambassador to the US Batu Kutelia.²³⁰

Several months later, in February 2013, the Kremlin's chief of staff, Sergei Ivanov, declared the Danish shipping company to be a "strategic investor" for Russia.²³¹ A year after that, in February 2014, war broke out in Ukraine. Maersk's intensified commercial efforts in

²²⁷ Anishchuk and Mikkelsen 2012.

²²⁸ Kezerashvili's ownership of these assets is suspected by Georgian anti-corruption civil society organization Transparency International. This suspicion appears to be confirmable by information from the Panama Papers leak, published by the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists in a database at offshoreleaks.icij.org.

²²⁹ Transparency International Georgia 2013.

²³⁰ Menabde 2019b.

²³¹ Kristiansen 2013, *PortNews* 2013.

Russia meant that it could stand to lose heavily if economic ties between Russia and the EU were broken or damaged by the conflict. Maersk said it was “following the developments in the relationship between Russia and the EU with concerns”, emphasizing that relationship rather than the actual crisis in Ukraine.²³² Rosneft was one of the companies sanctioned by both the US and EU. In December 2014, in a move condemned by the Georgian government, Rosneft purchased one of the four oil terminals at the APM-owned Poti seaport from David Iakobashvili’s Petrocas Energy.²³³ Poti is the only port in Georgia that can unload oil products from tankers. Russian control of even one oil terminal at Poti allows Rosneft control over oil flows through Georgia to the EU from Russia’s competing oil producers on the Caspian Sea.

Before leaving office, Saakashvili had proposed the idea of building Georgia’s first deep-water port. Deep-water ports can accommodate larger ships and therefore more types of goods; these larger ships could potentially include NATO warships. After Ivanishvili came to power, he picked up the idea and suggested Anaklia, a town only fifteen miles north of Poti and essentially on the Abkhazian border. The port project, led by the US-funded Anaklia Development Consortium (ADC) and the Georgian bank TBC Holding, was approved by the Georgian government in 2016. APM had already announced in 2011 its intentions to transform Poti into a deep-water port; there were now two rival projects being planned a very short distance apart, and with very different backers.

Russia opposes a Georgian deep-water port, as this would make Georgia more valuable to NATO and provide commercial competition for the nearest deep-water port, which is the Russian port of Novorossiysk. In 2018, APM’s partner in the Global Ports Investment group, the

²³² Kristiansen 2014.

²³³ *Agenda* 2015.

Putin-associated TIHL, sold its shares to another Russian business group, the Delo Group. The Delo Group is one of the primary operators at the port of Novorossiysk. APM, which already owned a third of Russia's largest port operator through its stake in Global Ports, was now working with a major stakeholder in one of Russia's largest seaports, which would also stand to lose commercially from the Anaklia or Poti projects. Moscow has a history of making "attempts to influence strategically important projects in the South Caucasus region in order to split the participants or slow down the initiatives' implementation".²³⁴ Rosneft's ownership of the oil terminal at Poti, plus Delo's partnership with APM, means Russia would at least have some meaningful control over this piece of infrastructure.

Mamuka Khazaradze, one of the heads of the Anaklia port project and a member of the political opposition in Georgia, claimed in 2018 that APM had been counter-lobbying Anaklia for a long time.²³⁵ At the end of May 2019, it was revealed that an unauthorized land use permit was granted to APM's Poti project earlier in the month.²³⁶ The permit was canceled, but ADC argued that the whole affair was evidence of a conspiracy against Anaklia.²³⁷ In 2018 and 2019, investigations were opened against Khazaradze, ostensibly to slow down progress in Anaklia and spook investors.²³⁸ In October 2019, Anaklia's principal US investor backed out of the project.²³⁹ Then finally, in January 2020, the Georgian government cancelled ADC's contract to build a deep-water port in Anaklia. The official reason was that ADC had failed to secure enough funding for the project; however, multiple political parties opposing Georgian Dream said that

²³⁴ Menabde 2019a.

²³⁵ *Commerzant* 2018.

²³⁶ *Agenda* 2019a.

²³⁷ *Ibid.*

²³⁸ *Ibid.*

²³⁹ *Istrate* 2019.

the decision was totally political.²⁴⁰ Meanwhile, APM announced just one month later that it was formally reinitiating the process to obtain permits for port expansion in Poti.²⁴¹ Knowingly or otherwise, APM and its parent Maersk are serving as a pawn of Bidzina Ivanishvili and Vladimir Putin, and contributing to a source of political instability and energy security in Georgia, an important strategic partner of the West.

These actions came at the same time as the Danish government's own reorientation towards greater support of Georgia and Ukraine through its neighborhood policy. In 2011, Lars Løkke Rasmussen, while addressing the annual meeting of the ambassadors in Copenhagen, said that economic development aid would continue to be an integral element of Denmark's active foreign policy, but that "to ensure that we get the most out of our assistance and make a real difference, we must also be ready to focus on fewer countries and sectors".²⁴² This thinking was on display in 2016 when the foreign ministry released its new neighborhood policy for Eastern Europe, 2017-21. Previous iterations of the policy had as priority countries Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova, Armenia, Albania, Bosnia, and Kosovo. The new policy focused only on Georgia and Ukraine. When asked to comment upon this new policy, foreign minister Anders Samuelsen explained that "cooperation partners in the neighborhood region have changed since 2005, in that both country composition, context, necessity, and challenges have also changed".²⁴³ The foreign ministry had also told *Kyiv Post* that this was due to budget cuts, but the refocusing of the policy from a wide range of countries down to the two most threatened by Russia is a clear statement of intent all the same.²⁴⁴

²⁴⁰ *JAM News* 2020.

²⁴¹ APM Terminals 2020.

²⁴² Løkke Rasmussen 2011a.

²⁴³ Samuelsen 2017.

²⁴⁴ Rahemtulla 2016.

The apparent attempt to economically and financially help bolster Ukraine and Georgia against Russian aggression was at odds with the economic policies towards Russia that Løkke Rasmussen carried out during his two periods as prime minister from 2009-11 and 2015-19, and that Helle Thorning-Schmidt upheld as prime minister during the intervening 2011-15 period. As was discussed earlier, Løkke Rasmussen's efforts to heal the Danish-Russian bilateral relationship presented primarily as strengthening commercial ties between the two countries. Anders Fogh Rasmussen had pitched Denmark's need for a green revolution as one of increasing Danish energy security individually and independence of Russian and Middle Eastern energy. Løkke Rasmussen adapted this green revolution idea away from a political foundation and towards an economic one. His "green economy" concept focused on developing green technology as "a massive commercial opportunity".²⁴⁵ When mentioning volatile energy suppliers, he either refrained from naming names, or named the Middle East. The 2014 Ukraine crisis did incite an overall change in his rhetoric, however, when he returned to office in 2015.

Helle Thorning-Schmidt made green growth an even larger component of her energy policy when she became prime minister in October 2011. Her approach to energy challenges had a greater focus on social justice, emphasizing inclusive accessibility to clean energy and highlighting the need for responsibility in national green transitions. Neither geopolitical concerns nor energy security factored meaningfully into speeches she delivered on the topic of energy policy. She also took up Løkke Rasmussen's task of growing trade ties with Russia. In December 2011, Mariann Fischer Boel was appointed export ambassador to Russia, in conjunction with the release of the government's Russia-specific market growth strategy report in 2012. The report focused on the healthcare and efficient energy sectors as new and promising

²⁴⁵ Løkke Rasmussen 2009; 2010; 2011b; 2016.

markets in Russia for Danish companies to tap into it, as well as established business networks there in which dozens of Danish companies are already participants. Objectives of the government were identified as building relationships with the central decision-makers in Russia in order support business efforts and advancing the narrative in Russia that Denmark is a green progressive country.²⁴⁶

However, Helle Thorning-Schmidt was also in office when Russia annexed Crimea and stoked a civil war in eastern Ukraine. This put her in the position of having to deal with a unique strain on Danish-Russian economic relations – the sanctions regimes that the EU and Russia have placed against each other. There were three rounds of Western sanctions, all of which are still in effect: diplomatic sanctions; visa bans and asset freezes against individuals and organizations; and economic sanctions against Russia’s financial, defense, and energy sectors.²⁴⁷ Russian countersanctions included an annually renewed ban on Western agricultural food exports (fruit, vegetables, meat, fish, and dairy). This ban was the one that would most affect Danish exporters, as Denmark is a large exporter of specifically pork and dairy products and has historically counted the Russian market for these products as an important one.

There were concerns over how greatly this would affect the Danish agricultural sector, but the minister of environment and food reported that the drop in food exports had been covered by an increase in exports to other countries.²⁴⁸ The position of the foreign ministry upon upholding the EU sanctions regime, in response to skepticism expressed by MP Marie Krarup, was that “it is of vital interest for a small country like Denmark that there is a rule-bound international world order, where regulation of states’ behavior is sought through international

²⁴⁶ Regeringen 2012.

²⁴⁷ Russell 2018.

²⁴⁸ Jørgensen 2015.

agreements and institutions...the price for letting Russia break international law and order without consequences will, in the long term, be higher and contribute to greater insecurity”.²⁴⁹

Regarding the energy sector, the American sanctions cover both the Russian gas and oil sectors; the EU sanctions do not apply to the gas sector because of EU dependence on Russian gas.²⁵⁰ This means that expansion of the Nord Stream gas pipeline project from northwestern Russia to northern Germany could continue unhindered. Denmark had approved the permit for Nord Stream in October 2009. Political support for the pipeline in Denmark at the time had already been established, in spite of surrounding concerns over the security effects of the pipeline. Therefore, there was no need to exercise the right of rejection, on any basis, that Denmark did have available to it due to the pipeline’s passage through Danish territorial waters. The success of Nord Stream led to the planning, beginning in 2012, of a companion line called Nord Stream 2. The two pipelines (each is actually comprised of two smaller pipelines, so in reality there are four) would have the combined capacity to transport 110 billion cubic meters (bcm) of gas annually. This time, however, the pipeline project lacked the support in Denmark that the original had enjoyed.

Poland, the Baltic countries, and Ukraine feared Nord Stream because it would, in their eyes and in their experiences, make Western Europe more dependent upon Russian gas and less willing to listen to their real concerns about Russia, many of which often had to do with their own dependence upon Russian gas. These fears were only compounded by the plans for Nord

²⁴⁹ Udenrigsministeriet 2016.

²⁵⁰ The American sanctions (specifically from the CAATSA act of 2017) also prohibit cooperation anywhere in the world with deep-water projects in which sanctioned actors have more than a 30% stake. Though the EU does not share this restriction, it is possible that fears of the EU adopting it, as well as fears of sanctions upon members of Konstantin Nikolaev’s personal business network spreading to Nikolaev and his company TIHL, could have been behind the sale of TIHL’s shares in Global Ports to the Delo Group in 2018, ensuring that the deep-water project at Poti could continue free of sanctions. However, this is purely speculative.

Stream 2. The stakeholders in Nord Stream 2 reject these fears of dependency. On their website, they cite a consumption forecast that sees gas production in the EU dropping by 50% by 2038.²⁵¹ An increase in imports of Russian gas, they argue, will not increase Europe's dependency on Russia, because gas companies will continue to compete in the free market and purchase where they find the best deal.²⁵² In November 2019, the Director on EU-Russia Cooperation Issues from the Russian Energy Agency spoke in Copenhagen at the annual Ruslandskonference (Russia Conference) that is held there by the Danish-Russian Union, supported by the Danish government. The director, Dr. Teodor Shtilkind, reiterated this argument. He also had a slide in his presentation dedicated to discussing gas transit through Ukraine.

One of the primary fears, shared by both Ukraine and its partners, is that completion of Nord Stream 2 will allow Russia to fully cut Ukraine out of its gas transit network. This would be serious for Ukraine, which earns \$3 billion annually from transiting Russian gas.²⁵³ Dr. Shtilkind, sharing the Russian argument against these fears, cited export figures showing that the amount of gas sent through Ukraine in 2018 “significantly exceeded the total capacity of NS2 and that of the 2nd line of the Turkish Stream project”.²⁵⁴ This is true; NS2 has a capacity of 55 bcm., while the second line of TurkStream has a capacity of 15.75 bcm. The combined total of approximately 70 bcm. does not cover the 87 bcm. exported through Ukraine in 2018. However, both lines of TurkStream (the first runs to Turkey, the second to southeastern Europe) have a combined capacity of 31.5 bcm., and Nord Stream plus Nord Stream 2 have a combined capacity of 110 bcm.²⁵⁵ This number does exceed the Ukrainian export figures.

²⁵¹ Nord Stream 2 2018.

²⁵² Ibid.

²⁵³ Khrennikova et al. 2019.

²⁵⁴ Shtilkind 2019.

²⁵⁵ Gazprom n.d.; Gazprom n.d.

In 2019, 58.5 bcm. of gas was sent through Nord Stream, so even the increased capacity of Nord Stream 2 would not allow for a hypothetical full redirection of Ukrainian gas transit through the Baltic pipelines.²⁵⁶ But, between Nord Stream and TurkStream Gazprom still has the capacity to, at the very least, decrease gas transit through Ukraine, and thereby decrease gas revenue to Ukraine. Poland also stands to lose gas transit revenue from the completion of Nord Stream 2 – Eser et. al. estimate that Poland will lose 23% of its gas transit revenue with Nord Stream 2, while Ukraine will lose 13%.²⁵⁷ They also conclude that “a short-term disruption of Ukrainian gas flows has only minor operational and financial impacts on the European gas system”; this does not, however, speak to the impacts on Ukraine.²⁵⁸ This could lay the conditions for greater effectiveness of Russian influence in Ukraine, such as, for example, pressuring the Ukrainian government into pro-Russia policies.

The EU is projected to increase gas imports by around 50 bcm. in the coming decade, according to Dr. Shtilkind. This amount would be covered by Nord Stream 2’s added capacity. However, the argument that Russia does not stand to gain influence over Western Europe with these increased deliveries can be countered. Russia does depend on income from Western European energy consumption, giving it less of an incentive to disrupt gas flows to that market. However, if Europe’s need for Russian gas is so dire, this arguably gives Russia the advantage in the relationship. If a political crisis were to strike between Russia and the EU during the cold winter months, a contraction of gas supplies to Europe would be much more damaging in the

²⁵⁶ Nord Stream 2020.

²⁵⁷ Eser et. al. 2019.

²⁵⁸ Eser et. al. 2019, p. 829.

short term than a contraction of income to Gazprom, especially as it is also actively seeking to expand its gas delivery capacities to China.²⁵⁹

It is these types of concerns that the young Danish MP Mette Frederiksen (Social Democrats/Socialdemokratiet, S) likely had in mind when she, in 2017, asked Lars Løkke Rasmussen to take a broader perspective on Nord Stream 2. “Everyone in this room knows that energy policy is about more than just energy, and one could say that in the current situation with Russia’s aggressive behavior...it would of course be problematic to frame a question of Russian gas and delivery of Russian gas solely as energy policy,” she said, addressing the parliament. “The question is therefore of whether Denmark is going into this with open eyes...when we had this discussion many years ago, when the prime minister also had a responsibility, [the government] chose to use the perspective that this was a purely commercial affair.”²⁶⁰ It is unclear whether she meant Anders Fogh Rasmussen’s government, which was in charge when Nord Stream first began to gain traction, or whether she meant Lars Løkke Rasmussen’s earlier government, which approved the construction permits for Nord Stream; either way, her words apply. Nord Stream 2 was met with significantly more opposition in Denmark than its predecessor, because of the previously mentioned concerns. The debate over whether these concerns are legitimate or not is realistically a political debate with no definitive answer; however, these were the concerns from the Danish perspective.

The problem was unfortunately one that Mette Frederiksen would herself inherit after being elected the country’s youngest-ever prime minister in June 2019. The original Nord Stream pipelines ran through the Danish territorial waters surrounding Bornholm. According to

²⁵⁹ Gazprom 2019.

²⁶⁰ Frederiksen 2017.

international law, a country can reject such a pipeline on any basis, political or security or environmental, if the plans run through territorial waters. If the plans run through a country's exclusive economic zone (EEZ), however, they may only be rejected on the basis that they pose an environmental hazard. Gazprom, very cognizant of this fact, planned for Nord Stream 2 to run through Denmark's EEZ. Originally it was planned for it to follow the route of Nord Stream, and run alongside Bornholm through Danish territorial waters, but Gazprom had a backup plan when the first was rejected by the Danes. This took the decision out of Danish hands; Putin recognized this when he said in early October 2019, "Whether Denmark is able to display independence and sovereignty depends on the country itself. If it is not prepared to do so, then there are other routes."²⁶¹ The Nord Stream 2 pipelines are planned and built in accordance with the necessary environmental regulations in the Baltic Sea. This meant that Denmark's hand was essentially forced into approving the pipeline, the final approval for which Gazprom had been waiting, in October 2019.

The governing parties in Denmark were unhappy. "It is not our conviction that we think the EU should have more gas from Russia. We would rather have avoided this case. In this concrete case, however, Denmark was obligated under international law to grant permission. It is a purely administrative decision," energy minister Dan Jørgensen (S) said of the approval.²⁶² Martin Lidegaard (Radical Left/Radikale Venstre, RV) called it an "unavoidable, but unhappy decision", while the Unity List (Enhedslisten, EL) wrote that "Russia should not be rewarded for its aggressive behavior around the world".²⁶³ However, while a majority of the Danish parliament opposed Nord Stream 2 as a political issue, not everyone did. The Danish People's

²⁶¹ Putin qtd. in *Berlingske* 2019a.

²⁶² Jørgensen qtd. in *Berlingske* 2019c.

²⁶³ Lidegaard and Villadsen qtd. in *Berlingske* 2019b.

Party (Dansk Folkeparti, DF) had expressed its support for the pipeline in 2018 and still considered the pipeline to be a purely commercial affair in 2019.²⁶⁴ Whether the pipeline does turn out to be a purely commercial affair or a geopolitical tinderbox remains to be seen. It was less than reassuring that, only two weeks after Nord Stream 2's final permit, Gazprom tried to negotiate its new gas deal with Ukraine (the existing one would expire at the end of 2019) to only a one-year deal, indicating a real effort to cut Ukraine out of gas transit as soon as Nord Stream 2 was fully operational.²⁶⁵ However, in a more hopeful development, Russia and Ukraine were able to secure a longer five-year deal the following month.

The US primarily opposes the completion of Nord Stream 2 because its completion, and Russia's ability to increase its gas sales to Europe, will make it more difficult for the US to expand its own energy agenda in Western Europe. There are also arguable political reasons for the US opposition, but these are not uniform and are complicated by the relationship between Donald Trump and Vladimir Putin. The US is seeking to increase its exports of liquefied natural gas (LNG) to Western Europe; the major issue is that there are prohibitive costs associated with importing LNG. LNG requires specific infrastructural capacities for an importer to be able to receive, store, and further distribute the gas. Eser et al. argue that the European pipeline market is already sufficient to accommodate both the American LNG and Russian Nord Stream 2 import strategies, with the qualifier that investments need to be made to upgrade the existing infrastructure to ensure the necessary bidirectionality.²⁶⁶ The completion of Nord Stream 2 is nonetheless a threat to this American corporate-political business interest.

²⁶⁴ *Berlingske* 2018; Lange Olsen 2019.

²⁶⁵ Soldatkin 2019.

²⁶⁶ Eser et. al. 2019.

Towards that end, in December 2019 the US joined Danish and other European politicians in linking energy security and gas supplies to defense policy. The American Congress voted to pass a new defense bill which named Nord Stream 2 “a tool of coercion” and sanctioned the pipeline, causing Allseas, a Swiss-Dutch company operating in Danish waters, to suspend its construction activities on the pipeline.²⁶⁷ However, this would only delay, rather than totally prevent, the completion of Nord Stream 2. At the time of the sanctions, Russia’s energy minister commented that the completion date would only be pushed back from late 2019 to instead the end of 2020.²⁶⁸ In addition to Russian anger, the US sanctions also prompted a strong response from the EU, which hit back against “the imposition of sanctions against EU companies conducting legitimate business”.²⁶⁹

As late as March 2020, US Senator Ted Cruz was in talks with Ukraine’s national gas and oil company, Naftogaz, about ways to halt the progress of the pipeline.²⁷⁰ Gazprom still has several ships available to it that it could make use of to pick up the slack where Allseas was forced to leave off; however, since the pipe-laying that remains is in Danish waters, and Denmark has strict laws on the types of ships that may operate in its waters due to the high number of unexploded bombs on the sea of the Baltic left over from World War II (somewhat ironically, these are Soviet bombs), there have been delays on approving one or both of Gazprom’s ships’ ability to continue work in the area. Nord Stream 2 will, by all estimates, be finished one way or another in 2020 – the primary questions by now simply concern when and by whom.

²⁶⁷ Gardner 2019.

²⁶⁸ Ibid.

²⁶⁹ BBC 2019.

²⁷⁰ Prince 2020.

Cultural Relations

Danish Russia expert Flemming Splidsboel Hansen conducted two companion studies, the first in 2010 and the second in 2018, analyzing the tone of Danish media towards Russia during the 2000s and 2010s respectively. He found that the top five newspapers in Denmark (*Berlingske*, *Politiken*, *BT*, *Jyllands-Posten*, and *Ekstrabladet*) all had negative outlooks towards Russia in the 2000s, shaped by Putin's aggressive centralization of domestic power and disproportionate use of force in Chechnya; in the 2010s, this trend grew and shifted towards a narrative in which Denmark and its allies need to protect themselves militarily against Russia's aggressive violation of borders.²⁷¹ Image construction by the media of a given topic can both influence and be influenced by popular opinion, and in turn these images bleed into pop culture media.

Literature

Both during the Cold War and following its resolution, Western media has commonly portrayed Russians, or more generally Eastern Europeans, as villainous characters; Russia often serves as a mysterious and sometimes nefarious location, rife with former KGB spooks. Despite the legacy of the Cold War fading somewhat in Western media, Russia remains a source of inspiration for political thrillers and mystery novels. Denmark is no exception. One of the country's most popular writers is Leif Davidsen. Davidsen worked as the Moscow correspondent for DR (Danmarks Radio) for much of the 1980s and was living in Soviet Russia during the collapse of communism. These were experiences that he brought into his writing when he began writing fiction during his time as a correspondent.

²⁷¹ Splidsboel Hansen 2010; Splidsboel Hansen 2018.

In 1988 he published *The Russian Singer*, the first of what went on to be known as his Russian trilogy. A Danish diplomat in Moscow is pulled into the political chaos surrounding the impending fall of the Soviet Union when one of his embassy coworkers is found dead in an apartment with a girl from the Estonian Soviet Socialist Republic. This was likely one of the earliest and best-known novels that would inform the average Danish thriller-reader of what was going on across the Baltic; it is therefore worth looking further into what kinds of details this average Danish reader would be learning, especially because the book was adapted to a film version in 1993. Davidsen does write sympathetically towards the Russian people – it would be disingenuous to cast him as a writer who vilifies Russians for the sake of a good story. Arguably, his sympathy is what causes him to write honestly about what he perceived to be Soviet government wrongs and societal chaos while he was living in Moscow. He did, however, state in an interview that when he was unsure of where a character's ultimate loyalties lay, "That's fine, because that's how it always is in Russia. Double betrayal lies deep in the Russians and in the power over there."²⁷²

The protagonist Jack Andersen falls in love with Lilli, the sister of the murdered Estonian girl, and his investigation of the murder, combined with their relationship, endangers Lilli, a Soviet citizen, with the government. The Russians that he meets all have their own stories of hardship and experiences with corruption, and they fear the existential failure of their country. At one point, Jack joins his embassy colleagues in a meeting with the Scandinavia desk at the Russian foreign ministry; the meeting turns into a lecture by Kamarassov, a Soviet official, about NATO's aggressive intentions, Denmark's need to use its influence and stop preparations for war, and the island of Bornholm's exploitation as a springboard for Western aggression against

²⁷² Davidsen qtd. in Bangsgaard 2013.

the socialist countries. Jack remarks, “It was hard to take it all seriously when you were seeing your small country described as an armed military giant that only wishes to wage war against the socialist countries. If it wasn’t tragic because Kamarassov meant it, it would have been comical.”²⁷³ This echoes a real-life interaction, mentioned in the earlier history and background chapter, in which Danish diplomat Alex Mørch met with Soviet Marshal Kirill Moskalenko and noted after the fact that Moskalenko’s conviction that the West was planning an attack on the Soviet Union revealed him to be depressingly misinformed.²⁷⁴ Andersen also bears witness to the rise of Pamyat (“Память” in Russian Cyrillic; “Memory” in English), a neo-Nazi ultranationalist organization in Russia dedicated to the preservation of Russian culture and national-patriotic Orthodox Christianity.

The Russian Singer, which is the only one of Davidsen’s Russia novels currently published in English, was followed up by *The Last Spy* in 1991 and *The Innocent Russian* in 1993. *The Last Spy* won the 1991 Golden Laurel (De Gyldne Laurbær) book prize, which is voted on annually by Danish bookshops and is usually won by a bestseller. The book tells the story of PET (the police intelligence service) head Jette Jansen’s pursuit of a spy in the Danish intelligence services and cooperation with a KGB agent to find the spy.²⁷⁵ *The Innocent Russian* follows Danish-Armenian Felix Terjosan Jensen to southern Russia, where he has a mysterious debt to Saddam Hussein to pay; this takes him to an international hotel, where politicians and mobsters from around the world gather to participate in a black market of former Soviet goods.²⁷⁶ After this book, Davidsen took a break from writing about Russia for the next decade.

²⁷³ Davidsen 1988, p. 124.

²⁷⁴ Mørch 1956.

²⁷⁵ Davidsen 1991.

²⁷⁶ Davidsen 1993.

Another Danish author, Klaus Enghvidt Olsen, also drew on his experiences as a Dane in a chaotic period of Russian history, this time 1990s Moscow. He was the director of the new Russian branch of the Danish chewing gum company Dandy (now known as Dansk Tyggegummi Fabrik, or Danish Chewing Gum Factory), which enjoyed great success in the new Russian market – chewing gum was widely discouraged in the Soviet Union – and competed with the American brand Wrigley.²⁷⁷ Twenty years later, Enghvidt Olsen released a collection of short stories called *Russia After The Wall's Collapse*, which he said was based in his “intimate knowledge of the country’s development, history and culture – and not least of the country’s residents, for better or for worse”; he had also traveled around the former Soviet Union in the late ‘80s.²⁷⁸ Enghvidt Olsen’s short story collection takes more of a slice-of-life approach than Davidsen’s, giving any Danish readers today insight into how their countryman experienced a tumultuous decade in the East.

Leif Davidsen returned to writing about Russia in 2006, when he released *The Unknown Wife*. He described it on the back cover as “a story of disappearance from the new Russia”, in which a Danish man and his Russian wife take a river cruise through Russia, until her disappearance in “Putin’s post-communist Russia” causes him to unearth a hidden truth about her identity.²⁷⁹ Putin became a character, albeit either anonymously or with a different name, in Davidsen’s Russia novels going forward. In 2013, he released *The Accidental Death of the Patriarch*. This novel brought the intrigue of Danish-Russian energy relations home to Danish readers. The half-Danish, half-Russian Adam Lassen learns that his twin brother Gabriel, who has been living in Moscow and working for the Patriarch of the Russian Orthodox Church,

²⁷⁷ Varoli 1999.

²⁷⁸ Enghvidt Olsen 2018.

²⁷⁹ Davidsen 2006.

Tikhon, has just been found murdered in Moscow. Adam begins to investigate the case on his own with the help of Masha Kudrina, a Moscow police officer whose brother Sasha Karbanov is a powerful Russian businessman with close political ties to the Kremlin.

As the truth unravels, Adam learns that Gabriel and his girlfriend's father had worked together on researching energy issues. His girlfriend's father was murdered after he discovered that the original Nord Stream pipeline had been poorly built and would eventually leak gas out into the Baltic Sea; the release of this information would ruin Danish-Russian relations and sink Sasha Karbanov's hopes of using Denmark and Danish companies to advance Russian pursuit of Arctic oil and an oil monopoly in Europe. Gabriel is murdered after he brings this information to Patriarch Tikhon, which also results in the murder of the Patriarch by the FSB. In addition to wanting to publicize the Nord Stream leak, Tikhon also advocated for the separation of the Russian Orthodox Church from the Kremlin.²⁸⁰

The president in *The Accidental Death of the Patriarch* who orders his security services to murder citizens and religious figures alike is clearly supposed to represent Vladimir Putin. In an interview, Davidsen said that Patriarch Tikhon was intended to represent Patriarch Alexy II, who died in December 2008. Davidsen cited rumors he had heard in Moscow that Alexy was murdered by the Kremlin for his refusal to bless Putin's war on Georgia several months earlier as inspiration for the starting point of his novel.²⁸¹ Although Georgia does not itself feature in this novel, Davidsen's characters do often eat at Georgian restaurants. One interesting change in the broader Danish-Russian relationship that can be tracked through Davidsen's books is the shift away from Russian-based exonyms in the Danish language. While many Western languages

²⁸⁰ Davidsen 2013.

²⁸¹ Davidsen qtd. in Bjørnkjær 2013.

refer to the country as “Georgia”, Slavic-based languages and languages of countries that historically were in contact with the Russian Empire often use a variant of “Gruzia”, the Russian name for the country. Since the Rose Revolution, the Georgian government has been actively trying to influence countries away from using the Russia-influenced terms for its countries and its people and instead use the Western exonym. In Davidsen’s earlier books, the adjective “gruziske” is used; in his later books, he uses “georgiske”, and the Danish word used today for Georgia is “Georgien”. Although it is difficult to locate a source for when this shift took place, Denmark obviously made a conscious choice to reject Russian influence in the etymology of some of its neighbors; similarly, Danish government websites have transitioned to using the Ukrainian “Kyiv” to refer to the country’s capital city, rather than the Russian spelling “Kiev”.

Davidsen’s most recent Russia novel, *The Devil in the Hole*, was released in 2016 and similarly draws inspiration from recent events surrounding Russia and fears in Denmark stemming from those events. It opens in the winter of 2014, as the ousted Ukrainian president Viktor Yanukovich (unnamed in the book, but unmistakably described) is fleeing his residence outside of Kyiv after the Euromaidan protests. One of his bodyguards, a half-Danish Russian nationalist named Tor, is shot in the leg during the evacuation and forced to return to civilian life. Tor’s father is a former Danish intelligence agent who served undercover in the Soviet Union, fell in love with a Russian woman, and defected from his country to remain in Russia with her, in the process abandoning his wife and daughter Laila in Denmark. Now an adult, Laila learns that her father has intelligence he is trying to sneak out of Russia, prompting her departure to go see him in Russia and validate his information. As it turns out, the Russian president, also intended to represent Putin, is planning on invading the Baltic countries. He wants to send Russians into the Baltics to pose as members of the Russian minorities there who can then claim

discrimination and raise unrest, thereby giving the Russian state an excuse to invade and defend its people abroad. Laila's father asks her to take this information back West so that the assault can be stopped and World War III can be avoided.²⁸²

This is also the first time Laila has heard of the existence of her half-brother Tor, and their new relationship is a focal point of the book. They have some similarities in their background: Tor worked for the Russian security services until his injury disqualified him from service; Laila grew up to be a patriotic Dane who served in the Danish military and deployed to Iraq, a model citizen of Anders Fogh Rasmussen's ideal of Denmark as a NATO team player. Otherwise, the two represent a clash of cultural norms between their countries. Tor works as a Russian Internet troll, using his Danish language skills learned from his father to work in the Danish social media sphere and attempt to influence Danish opinions in the direction of pro-Russia positions. To Laila's shock, he expresses un-Western values and often makes homophobic or racist comments, especially directing racial slurs towards people from the Caucasus region. Although they quickly become close, these cultural differences strain and alter their new relationship. There is also an incident in the book which, utilizing rather heavy-handed imagery, sees Laila save Tor from a bear attack on a hunting trip; the bear is a frequently used symbol of Russia, and the scene does little to advance the plot of the book.

In 2018, a former political employee in the government and later political commentator for *Politiken*, Peter Mogensen, also decided to release a Russia-centric thriller. His novel, *In the Bear's Claws*, manages to cover essentially all of the major points of the Danish-Russian relationship since the 1990s. The protagonist, Henrik Foss, is the foreign affairs spokesman for

²⁸² Davidsen 2016.

the center-right political party Venstre (Left). A veteran of the Danish military's Jægerkorps special forces, he lost his eye in battle with Russian militia forces in Bosnia in the 1990s.

Denmark is overtaking chairmanship of the UN Security Council, just as Chechen independence is being brought before the Council for a vote. The Russian president Sorokin (again, clearly representative of Putin) attempts to pressure Denmark into voting no, and the Danish government fears that Sorokin's pressure will entail a shutdown of Russian gas to Denmark and to Europe. Foss and Venstre continue to openly advocate for Chechen independence.²⁸³

There is a crisis of confidence among NATO members in Eastern Europe, who see that the US will put its own concerns above its Article 5 collective defense obligations as a NATO member; Donald Trump also makes a thinly-veiled appearance in references to an insane, Russian-installed American president known for using Twitter. Real-life Danish politician Marie Krarup also makes an anonymous appearance in the book, as a nameless female politician from the Danish People's Party (Dansk Folkeparti) who is friendly towards the Russian cause; the other characters do not suspect her of espionage, but remark that someone else like her could do it. A Russian-Chechen henchman, Kurtznes, is dispatched to Denmark to terrorize Foss by kidnapping his ex-wife and children and pressure him into revoking his support for Chechen independence; also pulled into the drama is a recently-graduated Ph.D. student who wrote her dissertation on Chechnya and later reveals herself to be a half-Chechen, half-Slovak granddaughter of Alexander Dubček, the Czechoslovak hero who led the Prague Spring against Soviet control in 1968. Kurtznes is eventually forced into making a dramatic escape into the Baltic Sea by submarine, which evokes memories among the characters of the submarine disaster

²⁸³ Mogenssen 2018.

(in real life, this was the Kursk disaster of 2000) in which the president allowed hundreds of Russians to die rather than accept Western help.

So far, the books described here draw heavily (if at times over-exaggeratedly) from contemporary Russian politics as inspiration for dramatic and suspenseful plots; however, this is not to say that historical Russian politics do not have a place in the present Danish literary space.

Martin Andersen Nexø, a well-known Danish writer during the twentieth century, lived a lifetime of controversial events and remains a controversial figure today. Born in 1869, he grew up on the Danish island of Bornholm, which would later be bombed heavily during the Red Army's liberation campaign at the end of World War II, and as a middle-aged man became a member of the Danish Communist Party (DKP). Nexø became known for the inextricable linkage of politics and art in his writing, which attained significant popularity in the communist countries of Eastern Europe. He traveled widely in the Soviet Union, for him the epitome of the socialist dream, and was present for one of Josef Stalin's show trials of the political opposition in the late 1930s; Nexø said the trial (which resulted in the execution of thirteen political opponents) was carried out "humanely" and with "absolute freedom of speech".²⁸⁴ When the Soviet Union invaded Finland and occupied the Baltic countries several years later, he congratulated the Baltic peoples on their "new freedom" and praised the "peaceful cleansing action".²⁸⁵

Some sectors of Danish political thinking regard Martin Andersen Nexø as possessing "naivety and partial political blindness".²⁸⁶ However, the so-called proletarian writer is today

²⁸⁴ Nexø qtd. in Kuttner 2004.

²⁸⁵ Ibid.

²⁸⁶ Kuttner 2004.

venerated by Danish leftists, who commend his antifascist views (despite his silence when Nazi Germany occupied Denmark) and advocacy for the proletariat, “which is to say, man himself”, and regard him as a lens for understanding contemporary political literature.²⁸⁷ Leftist workers’ movements in Denmark celebrated his 150th birthday in 2019 with a large conference in his name.²⁸⁸ One of his most famous works, *Pelle Erobreren* (*Pelle the Conqueror*), was turned into a film in 1987 that starred Max von Sydow and went on to win an Oscar.

Film and television

The Danish film and TV industries have not had a significant focus on Russia in recent years, choosing to focus more on the Middle East as a regional setting in light of the War on Terror and Denmark’s lengthy military engagements in Iraq and Afghanistan. However, there are still some releases that are worth mentioning in this context. Danish politics in the 2000s saw a meaningful revival of the memory of Denmark’s defeat to Germany in 1864 and subsequent loss of territory. Various politicians, most notably Anders Fogh Rasmussen during his time as prime minister, invoked this year as a reminder of what happened to Denmark when it isolated itself. In 2014, Denmark’s major public broadcasting service DR produced *1864*, the most expensive Danish TV series to date.

1864 brought to life the horrors of the Second Schleswig War and the pain of losing Schleswig-Holstein. It also told a parallel story of a Danish family in present-day Denmark, living with the loss of a son who died serving overseas; it is implied that he was deployed to the NATO mission in Afghanistan. This was an important series and important to make note of here, because it brought to the forefront of Danish pop culture twin narratives of what happened when

²⁸⁷ Löffström 2019a; Löffström 2019b.

²⁸⁸ Busk 2019.

Denmark did not have allies to protect it from aggressive neighbors and of what individual sacrifices these international alliances would entail to keep the country safe.

Also worth mentioning is a Norwegian TV series that began airing in 2015. Its Norwegian title, *Okkupert*, is directly translated to *Occupied* in its English-language release. *Okkupert* tells the story of a world in which the US has left NATO, and Norway's renewable energy industry has grown so much that it decides to fully cease production of oil and gas. The EU, currently undergoing an energy crisis, joins forces with Russia to pressure Norway into restoring gas and oil deliveries to Europe; this pressure takes the form of a de facto political coup by the Russian government within the Norwegian government and a takeover of Norwegian energy infrastructure by Russian forces. Investigative journalists are murdered, and Chechen terrorism comes to Oslo. The series was met with criticism by the Russian embassy in Norway, which said, "It is really shameful that the writers, in the same year that we are celebrating the 70th anniversary of the victory in World War II, appear to have forgotten the Red Army's heroic contribution to the liberation of northern Norway from the Nazi occupiers."²⁸⁹

The series was sold to DR and aired in Denmark under the name *Den russiske ambassadør*, which translates directly to *The Russian Ambassador* and is quite different from the Norwegian or English titles. In the wake of the 2014 Ukraine crisis and the resultant international condemnation of Russia, this title change of a popular and controversial TV series is a relatively small but nonetheless significant indicator of how Russia was viewed in the Danish entertainment industry at the time. It also serves to, at least at the outset, effectively put greater weight on Russia as the aggressor in the narrative, as opposed to the more generalized *Occupied*

²⁸⁹ Tjernshaugen 2015.

title which is a less-specific reflection of the EU-orchestrated, EU-sanctioned, and Russia-executed occupation that this fictional Norway goes through.

While a fictionalized Russia has not had a large presence on Danish TV screens, the real-life Russia has, markedly more so after the 2014 Ukraine crisis. DR's popular *Horisont* (*Horizon*) program, akin to the PBS program *Frontline*, did a feature in 2018 on the resurrection of Cold War geopolitical dynamics, called "Enemies again?" It opens with an unsettling montage of Vladimir Putin speaking about Western provocations, cut with footage of Lars Løkke Rasmussen talking up NATO commitments and Russian aggression. The rest of the 24-minute feature is split between following the 200 Danish soldiers stationed in Estonia as a NATO tripwire, and Grigoriy, a former Russian soldier who lives in the forest north of St. Petersburg and trains children in Yunarmiya, the Russian defense ministry's youth organization.

Though the two subjects appear rather polar, their words actually show more common ground than their purposes indicate. "Some say that we have to [be here]. There is a larger political game. In my head, the politics don't factor in so much," a Danish army private with the nickname Beef tells *Horisont*. "The threat is so small. I can't see [a Russian invasion] being the scenario. If that happened, then we're really fucked, regardless of however the hell we spin it."²⁹⁰ Similarly, Grigoriy expresses defensive views of his role: "The most important thing is that they don't invade us. What do we want with Europe? What's so special about Europe? Expansion of our territory? We have enough to do to secure what we have. Do we have plans to invade another country? No."²⁹¹ However, *Horisont* still takes the opportunity, as it did in the feature's introduction, to do some pointed narrative-framing when depicting soldiers on both sides. At one

²⁹⁰ *Horisont* 2018, 7:49-7:55; 8:28-8:40.

²⁹¹ *Horisont* 2018, 22:58-23:23.

point, Grigoriy and his friends drink and sing a song toasting the memory of Stalin; later, a truck full of Danish soldiers cheerfully sings a song by Cæsar, a well-known Danish protest singer of the 1960s.

In August 2000, a Russian submarine called the *Kursk* exploded underwater while conducting a naval exercise in the Barents Sea and sank; most of the 118-man crew were killed immediately. The disaster occurred eight months into Putin's first term as president; when Russian rescue efforts located the submarine, they were not adequately equipped to actually rescue any of the crew, 23 of whom survived the initial disaster but died waiting to be rescued. The British and Norwegian governments offered rescue help, which was refused by Putin until a week after the initial accident had occurred. Putin and the Russian navy came under fire for failing to respond adequately to the disaster.²⁹²

Production began in August 2015, exactly fifteen years later, for a film dramatization of the event. Danish director Martin Zandvliet was originally put in charge of the project, but control of the project eventually passed to the hands of Thomas Vinterberg, another Danish director. Vinterberg chose not to include Putin as a character in the film – *The Hollywood Reporter* published claims that the production company did so out of fear of retributive Russian hacking.²⁹³ Vinterberg denied this report, calling it “all bullshit” and explaining, “I made the decision because I think this movie was, first and foremost, about humanity. And I did not want this movie to reduce itself to become a finger-pointing movie against specific persons...Also, we do not know how or how much Putin was involved with this.”²⁹⁴ This apolitical approach was a

²⁹² BBC 2001; Rainsford 2015.

²⁹³ Siegel 2017.

²⁹⁴ Vinterberg qtd. in *The Hollywood Reporter* 2018.

somewhat unique one in an entertainment climate that arguably otherwise often politicizes the onscreen depictions of certain events or figures.

Sports

Sports in the 2010s provided a venue for a clash of cultural norms between Denmark and Russia. Russia hosted the 2014 Winter Olympics in its Black Sea city of Sochi. In 2013, Russia passed a law criminalizing the portrayal to minors of non-traditional sexual orientations or relations, by which was meant non-heterosexual relationships. Denmark, which has one of the world's most extensive and progressive track record on protection of LGBTQ rights, openly criticized the passage of this law. Over ten thousand Danes in Copenhagen protested the law in front of Christiansborg, which houses the Danish parliament, and then in front of the Russian embassy.²⁹⁵ There was concern among Danish politicians that homosexual participants and attendees at the Sochi Olympics would be subject to detainment or harassment by Russian authorities, but culture minister Marianne Jelved expressed her confidence in the International Olympic Committee's ability to protect its athletes, as well as its agreement with Russia that the law would not affect Olympic participants.²⁹⁶

Denmark has also been critical of the state-sponsored doping by Russian athletes to enhance their performance in international competitions. The Danish culture ministry expressed its disappointment that Russia had not been barred from the 2016 Summer Olympics in Rio de Janeiro, saying, "It is the Danish government's opinion that rules are there to be followed – and regardless of if one is an athlete, support personnel, a country, or a sporting organization, one

²⁹⁵ Just Poulsen 2013.

²⁹⁶ Jelved 2014.

must uphold the anti-doping rules.”²⁹⁷ Russia was later banned in December 2019 from all major sporting events for the next four years by the World Anti-Doping Agency, a decision that the Danish government welcomed and supported, as it “followed the line Denmark has had on the topic of doping for many years”.²⁹⁸

Russia hosted the 2018 FIFA World Cup, for which Denmark qualified. Denmark’s squad, captained by Simon Kjær and featuring stars such as Kasper Schmeichel and Christian Eriksen, progressed past the group stages of the tournament and made it to the knockout round of sixteen. Here, however, Denmark was eliminated by eventual runners-up Croatia in a penalty shootout. Russia’s hosting of the World Cup was racked by controversies, notably including the March 2018 poisoning of Sergei Skripal, a former Russian intelligence officer who worked with UK intelligence as a double agent, and his daughter Yulia in Salisbury, England. The British government accused Russia of being behind the attack and announced that it would not send any diplomatic representatives, as is otherwise customary, to the World Cup.²⁹⁹

Iceland and Sweden joined the diplomatic boycott, although Sweden eventually lifted the boycott after its squad qualified for the knockout round.³⁰⁰ Denmark did not entertain a diplomatic boycott of the tournament and was represented by minister of culture Mette Bock and ambassador to Russia Thomas Winkler.³⁰¹ Players and fans alike from other countries were penalized during the World Cup for political celebrations or expressions during matches, some of which criticized Russian actions in Ukraine; however, the only penalty Danish fans received was

²⁹⁷ Haarder 2016.

²⁹⁸ Mogensen 2020.

²⁹⁹ *BBC* 2018.

³⁰⁰ O’Connor 2018; *The Local* 2018.

³⁰¹ Bock 2018.

for throwing beer on Australian fans and displaying a banner that read “Big Boobs” in Danish during the Denmark-Australia group stage match on 26 June.

Cross-cultural cooperation

In May 2008, the Federal Agency for the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) was established as an agency of the Russian foreign ministry.³⁰² It was then reorganized by President Medvedev in September 2008, a month after the invasion of Georgia, into the Federal Agency for the CIS, Compatriots Living Abroad and International Humanitarian Cooperation – this agency is most commonly known as Rossotrudnichestvo. The purpose of this organization is to maintain Russian cultural influence and soft power in the regions of operation. It has an office in the heart of Copenhagen, the Russian Center for Knowledge and Culture, which also supports Russian cultural institutions in the rest of Scandinavia. Per the Center’s website, its mission is “to profile Russia as a country, promoting the Russian language and culture in Denmark by conducting various social and cultural activities that give participants a look into Russia’s modern life, art, music, literature, theater, film, and knowledge”.³⁰³ In pursuit of this mission, it hosts regular film screenings, concerts, and artistic exhibitions that either highlight a Russian contribution to the field or a Russian-Danish collaboration.

In May 2019 the Center screened the 2007 Russian film *Rusalka* (*Mermaid* in English, *Havfrue* in Danish).³⁰⁴ *Rusalka* is a loose modern-day adaptation of *The Little Mermaid*, one of the best-known stories by the prolific Danish writer Hans Christian Andersen. In each story, a

³⁰² The CIS was formalized in December 1991. Its member states consist of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. Turkmenistan has associate status, and Afghanistan and Mongolia have observer status. The Baltic countries chose not to join, and Georgia and Ukraine withdrew their memberships in 2008 and 2018 respectively.

³⁰³ Russisk Center for videnskab og kultur n.d.

³⁰⁴ Russisk Center for videnskab og kultur 2019.

young woman falls in love with a man who loves another. She can either choose to put his happiness first and allow him to be with his beloved, but at the cost of her own life or happiness, depending on the story; or, she can prioritize her own happiness, but at the cost of his life or freedom, again depending on the story. In *The Little Mermaid*, the mermaid kills herself rather than disrupt or end the life of the prince she loves. In *Rusalka*, the protagonist Alice is killed, freeing her beloved Sasha to be with Rita, the woman he really loves. Alice has a supernatural ability that causes the fulfillment of her desires; her death, therefore, can be interpreted as her final wish to allow Sasha to be freed of her influence and to choose Rita. Though the method of exercising agency differs between the two stories' protagonists, the intent and outcome are the same. The widespread popularity of each story in its respective country and adoption of its themes by the other country speaks to a cultural common ground between Denmark and Russia that is more frequently lost among the noise of high-level politics and confrontations.

Conclusion and Predictions

Russian-American relations and Russian-EU relations remain the defining frames for many international issues and conflicts today. Rather than discount the smaller and often undervalued bilateral relationships contained within these larger relationships, these frames actually heighten the emphasis that should be placed on these smaller bilateral relationships. Denmark, despite its small size, has a very strong case for why it should be accorded more attention and strategic value than it is currently. Its unique positioning, central to both major avenues of Russia's energy expansion into both Western Europe and the Arctic, means that the US, Russia, and any other major actors interested in the development of both European energy security and Western-Russian relations need to start counting Denmark in.

Outside of rhetoric, there is no single strategy available for achieving energy security in both Western and Eastern-Central Europe.³⁰⁵ Denmark occupies the unique space bridging the energy policies of both regions, and is directly involved in the transit and exploration processes of Russian energy initiatives in both the Baltic and Arctic regions. In addition to Denmark's staunch support of and participation in NATO, this is the primary reason why it needs to be accorded greater influence and importance by the US, Russia, and other major partners; this is why in-depth understanding of the Danish-Russian relationship matters. Understanding how the relationship we see today came to be is crucial to understanding where it can go, and where its potential for both peaceful cooperation and confrontational flare-ups lie.

In this thesis, I work to establish a map of what fluctuations we have seen take place between Denmark and Russia over the past thirty years, and which events, trends, and people prompted these fluctuations. We can use this information when looking ahead at how the relationship might look in the future. At the time of writing, the world is a few months into the coronavirus pandemic crisis, which complicates to a degree attempts at forecasting international relations. Danish prime minister Mette Frederiksen has been tasked with responding to a crisis that has no real precedent in living memory, and her initial measures designed to address the crisis have been well-received in the country, both politically and publicly. However, significant steps taken by the government in mid-April 2020, coupled with the long-term uncertainty of the crisis itself, will have strongly catalyzing effects on Danish politics that, in the future, will inevitably affect Danish-Russian relations as well.

³⁰⁵ Stefanova 2012.

If Frederiksen and her government continue to receive approval for their measures to combat the virus, she will likely be able to build upon this period for future reelection. As a result of high approval levels, she could experience a boost in self-confidence and assertiveness, and potentially establish a broader political consensus and base of support. In this scenario, we are likely to see a stronger Danish government and state, at least in the short term. Combine this with Frederiksen's record of opposition to Nord Stream 2, and Putin may find himself looking across the Baltic at a leader more difficult to push over than either his friend Lars Løkke Rasmussen or the more distant Helle Thorning-Schmidt.

If Frederiksen is unable to emerge from the coronavirus crisis in a good light, she may fail in a reelection campaign; there are different consequences to this, depending on the political orientation and eventual coalition of her successor. Should a centrist prime minister, whether center-right or center-left, replace Frederiksen, then we can reasonably expect to see a continuation of the Danish government's opposition to Russia's expansion of its energy sector; though Danish-Russian energy cooperation began and gained traction under Lars Løkke Rasmussen, a center-right prime minister, he also demonstrated an ability and willingness to change his position on the topic when presented with it again a decade later.

However, there is already evidence accumulating from around the world, and particularly in Europe, demonstrating a rise in successful authoritarian practices by opportunistic, authoritarian leaders who identified political advantages in the health crisis. Leadership in Poland, Hungary, Turkmenistan, and the United States are examples of growing tendencies towards greater authoritarianism as a result of the pandemic. If this rightward trend can find a foothold in Denmark, where the right-wing Danish People's Party (Dansk Folkeparti/DF) has been one of the country's largest parties for some years now, and where DF has already had

success in using the immigration crisis as a springboard, then there is a greater potential for change in the Danish-Russian relationship. Denmark's political culture makes the rise of authoritarianism there unlikely, in my opinion, but DF officials have expressed on record positions towards Russia and Nord Stream 2 that range from free-market indifference to open support. The defeat of Mette Frederiksen and the political center in a hypothetical election coming either during or soon after the coronavirus crisis could possibly lead to more Russia-supportive leadership and open more doors in Europe for Russian energy.

Regardless of what changes occur at the highest level of Danish politics in connection with the crisis, Denmark may find itself in an advantageous trade position, perhaps with other trade partners as well but specifically with Russia. Denmark is a large exporter of pharmaceuticals and medical supplies, and Russia in particular is a large importer of these supplies from Denmark – this industry was identified as a target for expansion in the Russian market strategy published by Helle Thorning-Schmidt's government in 2012. Though the Russian government entered the global crisis from a position of denial and spent the first quarter of 2020 reporting suspiciously low numbers of coronavirus cases in tandem with suspiciously high numbers of pneumonia cases, by mid-April it began to admit that Russia was also suffering severe damage from the virus.³⁰⁶ As Denmark is set to begin reopening the country earlier than many of its neighbors in the EU, this could potentially put it in the position to take greater advantage of regional demand for medical supplies, especially as Russia looks set to experience even greater upticks in disease cases.

³⁰⁶ Tsvetkova and Ivanova 2020; Higgins 2020.

The spring of 2020 also saw oil prices around the world plummet to devastatingly low levels; the price per barrel for Russian oil is, as of May 2020, significantly lower than what Russian oil companies require to break even.³⁰⁷ It is estimated that low prices, reduced demand for oil in Europe as a result of the coronavirus crisis, and the deep production cut Russia agreed to, in a nominal truce with Saudi Arabia in the two countries' oil price war, will lead to the loss of at least one million jobs in Russia and a huge leap in unemployment.³⁰⁸ These factors may trigger a recession in Russia and will very likely reduce the amount of energy-based leverage Russia can wield, at least in the short term, over partners or adversaries in Europe. This may in turn lead to a significant shift in power dynamics between Russia and Europe, especially depending on how well major European partners (Germany, for example) are able to insulate themselves against the global economic downturn.

Denmark is presently poised to reopen its economy, much earlier than its neighbors. If successful this could lead to a resurgence, albeit a small one, of gas and oil demand from Denmark, as people regain the ability to move around the country and commute traffic increases again to its former levels; a successful reopening in Denmark could also potentially prompt other neighboring countries to reopen sooner, thus returning some of the lost demand for Russian energy in Europe and placing the onus for cooperation upon Russia.

Political and economic ramifications of the coronavirus are brand-new factors into international relations forecasts, but the crisis will be, and indeed already is, a defining moment for politicians and international relationships around the world. Consequently, political results in the short term will depend in many cases upon political responses to the crisis, and Denmark will

³⁰⁷ Prince 2020.

³⁰⁸ Edwards 2020.

be no exception. Developments in Danish politics will in turn influence how the country interacts with Russia. On Russia's end of things, the short- and long-term effects of the current global crisis upon its energy industry (specifically oil) and its political leadership, particularly the support it can ultimately command of the Russian population, will be most meaningful in dictating both the direction of the country and the trajectory of its relationship towards and with Denmark.

In the final analysis, however, Russia will in the long-term continue to be victimized by its geography. The reality of its foreign policy goals, energy policy goals, and national defense goals all depend upon the reality of its geography; major theaters for all of these goals include the Arctic and the Baltic Seas. In both cases, Denmark serves as a gatekeeper. The consequence of this for Russia is that Russia must take greater account of its neighbor across the Baltic, especially given that each country is pursuing its own respective policy goals, which are often incompatible with the goals of the other, in one shared space. As long as the relationship between Russia and Denmark remains contentious and lacking in mutual respect, the relationship and physical spaces where it plays out will remain a tinderbox quick to spark conflict.

Appendices

Chronology of Denmark's governments

<u>PERIOD</u>	<u>PRIME MINISTER</u>	<u>COALITION</u>
3 June 1988 – 18 December 1990	Poul Schlüter III	K-V-RV
18 December 1990 – 25 January 1993	Poul Schlüter IV	K-V
25 January 1993 – 27 September 1994	Poul Nyrup Rasmussen I	S-CD-RV-KD
27 September 1994 – 30 December 1996	Poul Nyrup Rasmussen II	S-CD-RV
30 December 1996 – 23 March 1998	Poul Nyrup Rasmussen III	S-RV
23 March 1998 – 27 November 2001	Poul Nyrup Rasmussen IV	S-RV
27 November 2001 – 18 February 2005	Anders Fogh Rasmussen I	V-K
18 February 2005 – 23 November 2007	Anders Fogh Rasmussen II	V-K
23 November 2007 – 5 April 2009	Anders Fogh Rasmussen III	V-K
5 April 2009 – 3 October 2011	Lars Løkke Rasmussen I	V-K
3 October 2011 – 3 February 2014	Helle Thorning-Schmidt I	S-RV-SF
3 February 2014 – 28 June 2015	Helle Thorning-Schmidt II	S-RV
28 June 2015 – 28 November 2016	Lars Løkke Rasmussen II	V
28 November 2016 – 27 June 2019	Lars Løkke Rasmussen III	V-LA-K
27 June 2019 – present (May 2020)	Mette Frederiksen I	S

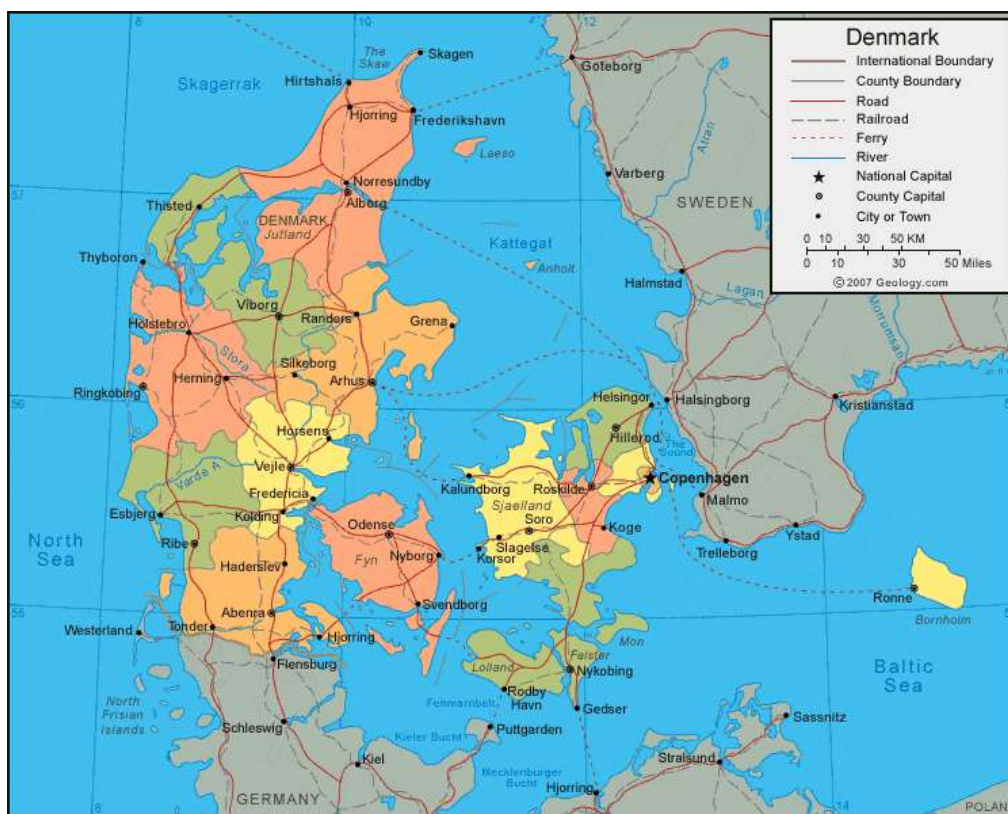
Guide to Danish political parties

(Currently represented in the Danish parliament, as of May 2020)

NAME (Danish)	NAME (English)	LETTER	IDEOLOGY
Socialdemokratiet	Social Democrats	S	Social democracy; center-left
Venstre	Left	V	Liberalism; center-right
Dansk Folkeparti	Danish People's Party	DF	National conservative; right-wing
Radikale Venstre	Radical Left	RV	Social liberalism; center
Socialistisk Folkeparti	Socialist People's Party	SF	Popular socialism; center-left/left-wing
Enhedslisten	The Unity List	EL	Socialism; left-wing
Konservative Folkeparti	Conservative People's Party	KF	Conservative; center-right
Alternativet	The Alternative	ALT	Green politics; center-left
Nye Borgerlige	New Bourgeois	D	National conservative; right-wing
Liberal Alliance	Liberal Alliance	LA	Liberalism; center-right
Inuit Ataqatigiit	Community of the People	IA	Socialism; left-wing (Greenlandic)
Siumut	Forward	SIU	Social democracy; center-left (Greenlandic)
Sambandsflokkurin	Unionist Party	SP	Liberalism; center-right (Faeroese)
Javnaðarflokkurin	Equality Party	JF	Social democracy; center-left (Faeroese)

Maps

I. Denmark.³⁰⁹



³⁰⁹ *Geology* n.d.

II. Baltic Sea Region.³¹⁰



³¹⁰ *The Baltic Times* 2019.

III. Arctic coast countries.³¹¹

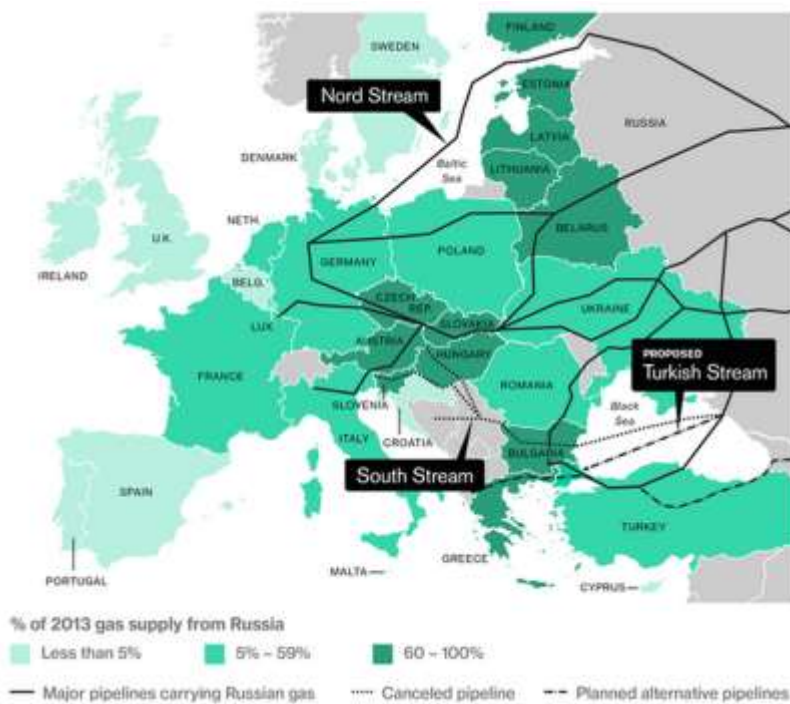


³¹¹ *Geology* n.d.

IV. Nord Stream 1 and 2 pipelines.³¹²



V. Russian gas pipelines to Europe.³¹³



³¹² Nord Stream 2 2019.

³¹³ Cohen 2018.

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